

NAPOLEON I AND THE ISRAELITES

This new volume brings to light, and shows in detail, the organization of Jewish preponderance: it follows on from the one that recounted its origins.

This organization is not merely, as many believe, a learned concentration of Hebraic forces: it includes among its elements the very lifeblood of the hospitable nation. It developed, aided by events, institutions, laws and customs. Events were favorable; mores soon offered little resistance; laws and institutions lent themselves to its roots.

Moreover, it grows from the decadence of others:

The magnificent rise of the Christian nations was compared by the Royal Prophet to the majesty of great waters. These majestic waters, flowing at full tide, passed victoriously over a rock, transformed into a reef by the Talmud: it was the Jewish people, enclosed in their bosom. But the day the waters became low, the laws, institutions and mores weakened, the rock emerged to become a peak, a summit, a preponderance.

Such a state of affairs is difficult to explain unless we take the trouble to go back to the Empire, the successor to the French Revolution. To the Constituent Assembly, from 1789 to 1791, Jewish preponderance was indebted for its origin; to Napoleon, from 1806 to 1815, it was indebted for its organization.

This vast genius, with his conservative and generous intentions, was largely mistaken in his measures towards the Jewish people. He believed that his laws and institutions would fortify society and dissolve the Hebrews, and the opposite was to happen. Finally, when the battle broke out between the mighty Emperor and the living debris of Sinai, it was the debris that resisted, and triumphed.

These various twists and turns make up a little-known episode of the Empire, and one of the greatest interest. We tell the story. May the reader, whoever he or she may be, bear us witness to this: how dear truth is to us, and, no less, charity! Our task is a difficult one. But in coming to the defense of the Christian people, and, following God's example, taking the side of Isaac against Ishmael, we are not forgetting the gentleness that can help make reconciliation possible. Don't both peoples belong to God's Christ, one as a child, the other as an ancestor? Napoleon was certainly doing a laudable thing when he worked towards rapprochement: his fault was to have attempted it without the Church. He was attempting the impossible! Only the Church can work underneath the edifice of concord, repairing its breaches and perfecting it. What a happy thing for society when we say: Israelites and other peoples are brothers, not in civil guise, but for real!

May the heavens grant that this historical study, which sheds light on situations by faithfully recounting the good and the bad, also diminishes the distance that separates!

Lyon, March 19, 1891.

CHAPTER ONE

HOW NAPOLEON CAME TO CARE FOR THE ISRAELITES

I. Napoleon's glory did not disdain the Jews. –

II. The decree of emancipation and equality issued by the Constituent Assembly in 1791 had in no way improved their lot; nor had it brought the French any closer to them. The Talmud hedge. –

III. By what chain of circumstances was Bonaparte led to undertake this improvement and rapprochement? His first encounter with the Jews: in Syria. The eastern dream of the conqueror of the Pyramids.

IV. Then, he meets them in the wake of his armies, during the Austerlitz campaign: the eagle and the vultures. –

V. Third encounter: Strasbourg. Alsace, devoured by them, complains to Napoleon. The leprosy of usury. Conscription evaded. The emperor holds back his irritation. –

VI. Returning to Paris, he unloads a sword on all the claims of the Jews of Alsace. The Council of State is seized of the Jewish question. Session presided over by the Emperor, where he exhales his irritation. The thought of his glory brings him back to a calm examination of the question. A flash of his genius: convocation of a Jewish Estates General. –

VII. Importance of specifying the historical context at the time when these singular Estates General were to be convened: it was the height of the Empire; Napoleon's image was that of a demigod; what he himself thought of religions.

I

"He loves glory, because everything else cannot fill the immense emptiness of his soul. He devours time, he devours space, because he has to live faster, walk faster than other men. He weighs the world in his hand, and finds it light; and with his forehead half bent over the abyss, he begins to dream of the eternity of his dynasty and universal monarchy. "1

That's Napoleon!

Some people have worshipped the sun; Napoleon worshipped his own glory. It had risen like the sun.

An eagle, he stared at it, drinking it in.

He consulted her in all his undertakings, invoked her in his proclamations to his soldiers. He was in love with her, dazzled by her, infatuated with her. He wanted her to shine, to be empress of the world, wrapped in glory: but France's glorious garment was himself, with his victories, his crowns, his name!

Her glory had all the characteristics of ancient divinities: it was insatiable, tinged with purple and blood, despotic and terrible.

One day, she encountered the Jewish people.

Her first reaction was, no doubt, disdain and contempt. Did glory have anything to do with these people?

Perhaps it did!

And the Emperor's face must have turned pensive. What a monologue!

Doesn't the sun that shines on the golden dome of the Invalides also have a few rays for the alleys of the Jews? And doesn't the eagle, after soaring high in the heavens, enter the holes of the abyss?

And mounted on the pinnacle, he longs to descend!

From the summit of the Concordat and the handling of thrones, to descend into the affairs of the Jews – what a departure for your genius, O Napoleon!

But isn't there a glory in dashing from one extreme to another, and hasn't it been said that this superb march is that of the Almighty?

Come on, Napoleon, you won't lose time or prestige by taking care of them!

And his glory, which by 1806 had already focused its rays on so many peoples, began to consider them too.

In this first book, we shall recount his loyal undertaking to correct their morals and reconcile them with the rest of the world.

II

The Emperor's enterprise will come as a surprise to anyone who has read our previous work. One might ask: "But hadn't the Constituent Assembly already invited the Israelites to join the common life? Wasn't this invitation made in 1791, with the decree of their emancipation? The year was 1806. Fifteen years have passed. In those fifteen years, has there been no transformation, no rapprochement between the French and the Jews?"

History answers: No transformation, no rapprochement.

Indeed, the people were less than eager to open their ranks to the new citizens; and the latter deemed it prudent not to abandon their alleys. We looked at each other from both sides, as if we were made of earthenware! But could it be otherwise? Wasn't it naive to think that people who had been accustomed for centuries to living apart from mainstream society would suddenly abandon their customs and their homes and start living the French way?

However, there are other reasons for this mutual circumspection. What are they?

Events have had a hand in it. We lived through the years of the Terror, everyone confined to their homes as much as possible. We then moved on, without transition or truce, to the battlefields.

Admittedly, there wasn't much time left to get to know each other. Nevertheless, the real cause of circumspection lies elsewhere.

Could it be in the Law of Moses, which differs in certain respects from the Christian Law? Not precisely. "Standing at Sinai, Moses listens and writes: he listens and writes a Law from which thirty-three centuries have not removed a syllable, which Athens has received, which Rome venerates, which conscience recognizes as its own, and which Jesus Christ, who came from God to consume all, also declares to be his law. Moses is to Sinai what Adam is to Eden.² "

Brothers in Adam, Israelites and Christians will find no difficulty in continuing this brotherhood in the shadow of Moses' Decalogue.

So what keeps them apart?

The hedge of Talmudic laws!

From their private authority, the rabbis added and added to the Law of Moses, and these heaps of additions became inextricable jumbled messes: their coming together makes up the Talmud, filled with decisions where the Spirit of God is absent, a jumble of cumbersome things, and ridiculous and interminable subtleties. Didn't the rabbis decorate these additions with the name of hedge to the Law, as if they had received the mission of protecting it! Alas! no better name has ever been found, but with a gloomy meaning. The poor Jews were literally fenced in, imprisoned by this hedge, they who had enjoyed the great avenues of the Bible. Ah, the Talmud is not a bulwark of blossoming hawthorns, but rather a bristling, impenetrable hedge, favourable to snakes, theft and plunder, behind which dangerous decisions have been taken in hatred of Christianity. If not, why would Popes and very Christian Kings have so often ordered the destruction of copies of the Talmud?

Now, - to return to the persistent circumspection of Christians and Jews despite the liberating and fraternal decree of 1791 - it can be explained by the fact that the detestable hedge has been maintained, the undergrowth being as inextricable and as dangerous as ever. People who live in the undergrowth, behind the hedges, are exposed, almost in spite of themselves, to less-than-honorable occupations, like

gypsies; so it was with the Jews behind their Talmud, even after the emancipation of 1791; is it any wonder that, for their part, Christians didn't much care to trade with people who had repudiated nothing of their distrust and habits? This is the real cause of mutual circumspection.³ Israelites, eager for light and rapprochement, were not afraid to admit it, even at this time, and to call for a clearing-up. "In 1800, an association of Dutch Jews published a resolution to recognize only the pure and consoling religion of Moses, and to reject the institutions which, until then, had been called Talmudic laws. This association had many adherents. In 1801, a general congress was planned, to bring together in Lunéville the representatives of all the Jews dispersed in the various states of Europe.⁴" This project, which was not accepted by the French government, was a great success.

Bonaparte was to take up this project again. A soldier's boot was, alone, capable of venturing through this undergrowth; and a voice like his was needed to command: Come out of your holes; line up! Let's see you!

But what was the chain of circumstances that led Bonaparte to take this initiative and become involved with the Jewish people? It's important to understand this before delving into the details of the transformation project.

III

"Here we are, obliged to do great things!" exclaimed Bonaparte on Egyptian soil, on learning that the French fleet had just been completely destroyed by Nelson at Aboukir, and that he was trapped in the East, following the loss of his fleet.

His departure from Toulon, in the spring, under a splendid sky, with a harbor full of spectators, had been full of enthusiasm; but at that moment his plans were still uncertain. The Orient of infinite thoughts was opening up before him. Like the eagle of Lebanon which, from the top of the Sannin, looks at the sun, turns its head towards different points in the sky and for some time hesitates as to the prey which its swift flight will reach, the young general-in-chief, from the top of his ship, had wondered whether he would go to relieve Athens or Sparta, attack Constantinople or Cairo, take Aleppo and from there threaten India. His bellicose imagination played with the kingdoms of Asia; he felt within himself something like omnipotence. He would have gladly said to the wind: Push my sail wherever you like, and woe betide any nation that resists my sword! Bonaparte decided to go for the Pyramids. He wanted to measure himself against the granite colossi of Heliopolis or Thebes, to ensure the future grandeur of his stature.⁵

The news of his fleet's destruction did not move him. Turning back to his comrades-in-arms, he told them of his obligation to do great things. He was intoxicated with youth and strength, and determined to perform prodigies. He dreamed of repeating Alexander's conquests, facilitated by the means of modern warfare in lands that had never known them.

The empire of the East really presented itself to his mind,⁶ and it was then that he first turned his attention to the Israelites.

The methods he used to deal with them, in the land that was so dear to them, resembled those that his policy and his deism advised him to use towards the sons of Islam, albeit more discreetly. Historians have recounted the advances he made in religion to win the trust of the Arabs. To look after the mosques and their interests with marked care and partiality; to surround the muftis and imans with honors and extraordinary consideration; to speak to them of Mohammed with admiration; to enter into the views and sentiments of Islamism; to attend their festivals, the feast of the Nile, the feast of the Prophet; to see to the sumptuousness of a carpet covered with sentences that Muslim pilgrims had to carry to Mecca : these were the accommodations, not to say captations, of the conqueror of the Pyramids;

accommodations unknown to previous conquerors. The old muftis listened to him with rapture. Their eyes sparkled with rays of happiness as he promised them the restoration of the Arab empire, the return of the glorious times of the Fatimites. 7

He was just as gentle with the Israelites. When, master of Egypt, he undertook the conquest of Syria and Palestine, he advised his soldiers to respect the synagogues. He caressed the old beards reminiscent of Aaron's, offering them the hope of reviving the Hebrew name. He issued a proclamation in which he invited "all the Jews of Asia and Africa to come and rally under his flags, to restore Jerusalem to its former splendor". 8

But Saint-Jean d'Acre stopped him. 9

He could only contemplate Palestine from the summit of Tabor, which the Arabs call Gebel-el-Nour, Mountain of Light. This vision left an indelible impression on him. 10

A few days later, he set sail for the West. On the deck of the ship, he was reading the Bible. 11 The East did not see him sail away without regret. 12 For his part, he remained under the spell of "this cradle of the world and of great things". He loved to talk about it on St. Helena. 13 The eternal silence of the Pyramids, interrupted by his cannon, the consideration of the extraordinary duration of the Hebrew people, whose lawgiver Moses was still after having been their guide from the Nile to the Jordan, the keys to Palestine that had escaped him at St. John of Acre - all these things had left something great in his soul. And so, when the time came to settle the destiny of the Israelites, oriental reminiscences made him look down on the question.

His government was the interpreter of this feeling, when, in the famous assembly we report below, it gave the Jewish question this prologue which is not lacking in grandeur: "In dealing with the organization of the various cults, the government has not lost sight of the Jewish religion; it must participate like the others in the freedom decreed by our laws. The government felt it had to respect the eternity of this people, which has come down to us through the revolutions and debris of the centuries, and which, in all that concerns its priesthood and worship, considers it one of its greatest privileges to have only God himself as its legislator. 14

So it was in the East that Bonaparte first encountered the sons of Israel.

IV

The second meeting took place in Germany, in the wake of the armies, on the evening of the battlefields.

What a contrast there was between him and them: he in all his military glory, they in all their base passions!

It was the eve of the Battle of Austerlitz:

The terrain is favorable to the Russians and Austrians. They occupy a fairly high plateau, around which their battalions spread out. With that marvelous instinct that enabled him to foresee everything in war, Napoleon showed the plateau to his generals, and said: "The Russians will make the mistake of abandoning it: I'll establish myself there, I'll cut their army in two, and they'll be lost without a resource. The Russians attack before daylight. A thick mist covers the vastness of the battlefield. Around eight o'clock, the sun appears in all its glory. Napoleon arrived at full gallop, joyful and superb, like an eagle sizing up its prey. He let the enemy commit part of his forces, offering him only eleven thousand braves, who remained impassive for six hours. Suddenly, with his reserves, Napoleon seized the heights from which the Russians had descended, drove into their center, cut them in two, and forced one of their entire corps to venture onto icy ponds, soon half-opened by cannonballs.

It was the eagle!

But the battle is over, evening has come: from far and wide, the last rumblings of cannon! By the light

of torches, the dead are stripped; the torn and bloody effects are quickly estimated in hushed tones: by this estimate, there are Jews.

After the eagle, the vultures!

It's a painful contrast, but it's true; Napoleon himself expressed himself in these bitter terms: "They're like swarms of crows. We saw them at the battles of Ulm, who had flocked from Strasbourg to buy from the marauders what they had looted.¹⁵ We know that Ulm paved the way for Austerlitz. The historian who reports these words of the Emperor adds: "Napoleon had strong prejudices against this class of men (the Jews). He had drawn them from the armies, which were too often followed by Jews greedy for gain and ready to deal in anything. "¹⁶

But, remembering that in their ranks had once appeared the Machabees, the eagle said to himself: Why not try to transform them, and bring them back to their first nature?

V

Third encounter:

On his way back from Austerlitz, the Emperor stopped in Strasbourg. Immediately, from every corner of Alsace, extremely loud complaints and petitions against the usury of the Jews arrived at the feet of the Emperor.

An ugly but symbolic disease, leprosy, if transferred to the moral sphere, would suffice to prove that the Jews have committed a great sin in the course of their history, one that heaven has not yet forgiven them for. A symbolic disease, we say:

Indeed, Christian doctrine, pointing to its existence in the moral sphere, has rightly named sin and bad morals with this disgusting appellation: the leprosy of sin, the leprosy of misconduct! Yes, indeed, those who live in misbehavior, to whatever religion they belong, are, in the most pure eyes of the Divinity, horrible lepers. But the sons of Israel have become so, alas! in another way: through sordid greed and usurious practices. May they allow and forgive us the following short but necessary correlation:

People looked upon leprosy as an unequivocal sign of heavenly vengeance; its name alone inspired horror – Was it not so with avarice, which became the stigma, the reddish scale of Israel, an unequivocal sign of heavenly vengeance? Judas, you sold Christ for thirty denarii: because of you, your unfortunate brothers have become usurers, the lepers of the world!

In leprosy, the limbs fall to shreds, but most of the time, the patient survives. It seems that this hideous disease has less of a grudge against man's existence than against his forms, and that its triumph consists more in degrading than in destroying. – So it is with usurers: they are degraded and cannot die!

Finally, leprosy is contagious, spreading and devouring; and so is usury! When Napoleon stopped in Strasbourg, Alsace appeared devoured and shredded before him. Here are the reports, or rather the wounds, that were laid out before his eyes:

a) Excessive loans. – In general, the Jews demand 1.50 francs a month for the interest on 24 francs, which brings the interest on the sums they lend to 75 percent a year. As the interest is added to the capital in the bills they issue, it is difficult to obtain legal proof of such excessive usury. It is rare that those reduced to the necessity of resorting to the Jews are able to free themselves at the agreed times. On the due date, the Jews do not fail to obtain judgments of condemnation, and they oppose the mortgages. The mass of claims for which they have obtained registrations is frightening: it is said to exceed thirty million. They take great care not to allow interest to accumulate beyond what their debtors' assets can guarantee. When they believe they should no longer grant a term, they proceed with the sale of the assets.

b) Forced expropriations. – The proceeds of forced expropriations amount to around 1,500,000 francs

a year in each of the Haut and Bas-Rhin departments, and of this sum the Jews, according to the surveys we have carried out, have about 6/7.

c) Mortgages. – The number of mortgage claims registered at the registry offices, in favor of the Jews, from the beginning of Year VII to January 1, 1806, totals 21,199,826 francs, so that, if none of these registrations had been purged since Year VII, the Jews of the Haut-Rhin would currently have more than 23,000,000 mortgage claims on property owners in this department.

d) Claims due. – In addition to these mortgage claims, the Jews have 10,000,000 claims due: private bonds, bills of exchange, bearer bills. It should be noted that mortgage claims mainly concern rural property.

e) Land grabbing. – Through the excessive loans they have made to farmers, and the mortgages they have taken out to guarantee these loans, the Jews have vassalized a large part of the land in Alsace. Ownership sometimes passed even more directly into their hands. In 1793, many farmers were forced to leave their homes to escape death. The Jews acquired all these abandoned inheritances at a very low price, and when those who owned them returned, speculating on their affections and miseries, they sold them so dearly that, for lack of full payment or by dint of accumulated interest, they soon became owners a second time.¹⁷

But because usury, like leprosy, is contagious, servants and day laborers came to bring the Jews the price of their services or their days, so that they could sell them as their own money; and notaries seduced by them used their ministry to hide their shameful traffic!¹⁸

When the Emperor heard all this, he must have had wrinkles in his forehead and lightning in his eyes. But he's in control, he listens, he knows how to listen! So what could he be doing right now? In the past – and this is the last resemblance with lepers, who are isolated by separating them from the general population – Jews were isolated, kept apart in their neighborhoods, veritable leper colonies. But the Constituante had thrown them into the midst of society, and Napoleon, all-powerful as he is, would never dare to turn them back into their own back alleys, with laws of exception.¹⁹ On the contrary, he wanted to tear them out, and shape them in the French way.

Another abuse adds to his wrath. His Majesty was informed of the tricks they used to avoid conscription. Napoleon was stung! What's more, these deceptions were imitated: "Everywhere, false declarations were made at the civil registry office: fathers declared boys born to them as daughters; and mayors tolerated these irregularities, even cooperating if necessary by falsifying civil registries. Of the sixty-six Jews who, within a period of six years, were to form part of the Moselle contingent, not one entered the armies; and in the department of Mont-Tonnerre, until 1806, the Jews constantly evaded the laws of conscription. ²⁰ Their habit of having no patronymic name, and of constantly changing it, singularly favored these deceptions.

That's a good thing. The case is heard. Napoleon promises justice. ¹¹ leaves Strasbourg.

VI

Napoleon is in Paris.

His first act on the Jewish question is to saber-rattle the claims of the usurers of Alsace. That's how a sincere rabbi put it. "Napoleon, who was not joking, as Talleyrand used to say, unloaded a saber blow on the Judaic claims. "²¹ The blow was struck from the palace of Saint-Cloud:

At the Palais de Saint-Cloud, May 30, 1806.

On the account given to us... that certain Jews, exercising no other profession than that of usury, have,

through the accumulation of the most immoderate interests, placed many farmers in a state of great distress,

We thought we should come to the aid of those of our subjects whom unjust greed had reduced to these unfortunate extremities.

And the decree orders a one-year stay of execution on all judgments and contracts in favor of Jews by non-merchant farmers in several of France's northern departments.

A real sabre-rattling! as we said; nevertheless, the matter of Messieurs les juifs will in no way be sabre-rattled in the rest, i.e. it will be neither rushed nor rudely dispatched: so much the worse! One of the Emperor's favorite tactics when dealing with difficult issues and affairs was to begin with a show of force, to intimidate, soften opposition and suddenly put the odds in his favor; then he proceeded, with sagacity and depth, to examine the affair from every angle.

Indeed, a few days before the violent action at Saint-Cloud, Napoleon had referred the Jewish question to the Conseil d'État, and some very curious incidents had taken place. We report only the main ones, according to the faithful accounts of eyewitnesses.

Mr. Molé, a young, new auditor, had drawn up a report concluding that unfavorable measures should be taken against the Jews, a sort of return to the laws of exception;

Mr. Beugnot, a recently appointed councilor, concluded with measures more in harmony with the liberal ideas of the Conseil d'Etat;

Since agreement and a solution seemed difficult, the Arch-Chancellor, M. Régnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, announced on behalf of the Emperor that the discussion would be taken up again before His Majesty, one day when she was presiding over the Council.

The session was held at Saint-Cloud:

M. Beugnot, speaking for the first time before the Emperor, was emphatic, pretentious, declamatory, everything that should not be at the Conseil d'Etat, where the discussion was a businessman's conversation, with no research, no phrases, no need for effect. The Emperor was clearly impatient. Mr. Beugnot called a measure taken by exception against the Jews a battle lost in the fields of justice. When he had finished, the Emperor took the floor, and with a verve and vivacity more marked than usual, he replied to M. Beugnot's speech, sometimes with mockery, sometimes with calm; he spoke against theories, against general and absolute principles, against men for whom facts were nothing and who sacrificed reality to abstractions. He raised with bitterness the unfortunate phrase about the lost battle; and, becoming more and more animated, he came to swear, which, to my knowledge, has never happened to him at the Conseil d'Etat; then he ended by saying: "I know that the auditor who made the first report was not of this opinion, I want to hear him." M. Molé rose and read out his report; M. Régnault de Saint-Jean- d'Angély quite courageously defended the contrary opinion and even M. Beugnot; M. de Ségur also ventured a few words: "I don't see," he said, "what we could do. The Emperor had relented... 22

Three sessions were devoted, in the Emperor's presence, to these preliminaries of the Jewish question. 23 In the first (April 30, 1806), Napoleon uttered the terrible words quoted above: "These are veritable clouds of crows. We saw them at the battle of Ulm, who had flocked from Strasbourg to buy from the marauders what they had looted."

In the second (May 17), he insists on their disastrous role: "... I point out once again that we don't complain about Protestants or Catholics in the same way as we do about Jews; the harm done by Jews comes not from individuals, but from the very constitution of this people: they are caterpillars, locusts ravaging France." Then, a flash of his genius piercing through this vicious constitution, he exclaimed: "We must assemble the Estates General of the Jews; I want there to be a general synagogue of the Jews

in Paris." The vision of his glory had returned to him, a calming, transforming vision, because it was still God's vassal; indeed, he adds: "I am far from wishing to do anything against my glory and which might be disapproved of by posterity.... There would be weakness in driving out the Jews; there will be strength in correcting them."

In the third session (May 21), he unloaded the famous saber-rattling we've been talking about: the one-year reprieve imposed on Judaic debts; vehement prologue, notice to the Jewish Estates General that were about to be convened: that docility to the Emperor had to be written, somewhere, in their Bible and Talmud! Moreover, so that the sons of Israel would not be misled as to what to do, the same decree (May 30) announced both the saber-rattling and the convening of these Estates General.

VII

Before contemplating the singular reunion of the dispersed people of the old centuries, convened, as the decree put it, in the good city of Paris, it is of great importance, in order to appreciate the true value of the words and deeds of this meeting, to recompose by thought the historical milieu in which it was held. As the reader will have noticed, we are accustomed to recomposing historical environments; it is the essential condition for sincere criticism.

The year is 1806. This year and the next, during which the Israelites summoned from France, Italy and Holland were to find themselves in Paris, marked the apogee of the Empire. Between 1806 and 1807, the Empire presented a dazzling spectacle. Napoleon wore the coronation halo on his forehead: Pius VII had agreed to crown the warrior who had bowed to Christ. Beyond the frontiers, trails of victories, like milky ways, lead to Marengo and Austerlitz. France's preponderance was unrivalled under Richelieu, Henri IV or even Saint Louis. And as for its new sovereign, who can be compared to him? He has single-handedly driven out foreigners like Charles VII, re-established religion like Henri IV, and conquered more power and glory than a long line of forebears and the impetus of a great century had given to Louis XIV. Ireland and Poland look upon him from afar as a liberator. The princes of old Europe trembled before him. At home, a general amnesty for émigrés further enhanced the exploits of the great captain, who at the same time revealed himself to be a consummate statesman: legislation, finance, administration, public works, general security, everything, under his powerful hand, had just changed face, and justified universal enthusiasm. The Emperor, simple and austere to himself, has surrounded himself with a grand entourage and a brilliant court; his marshals and ministers have been rewarded with principalities or dukedoms; his brothers are entering the family of kings. In Paris, the treasury, replenished by the war, offered security and paid for major works; the Austerlitz bridge was built over the Seine; canals were multiplied; Saint-Denis, once again the burial place of the sovereigns, and Sainte-Geneviève, restored to worship, received major developments; The Vendôme column was erected with the cannons taken from the enemy; the Carrousel triumphal arch was built, and Napoleon made the celebration of the great army coincide with an exhibition of French industry, associating, according to his favorite thought, civil glory with military glory.

It was at the moment of the agglomeration of all these splendors that the Jews were summoned to Paris! History has preserved the response of the Doge of Venice, who was obliged to come to Versailles to lay the republic's apologies at the feet of Louis XIV. When asked what had most excited his astonishment in the midst of this sumptuous court, in this palace of Versailles with its royal park, its grandiose avenues and its thousand bubbling fountains, he replied: "To see myself there! All the more reason for the Jews, humiliated pariahs, embarrassed in their contentment, scattered, but also summoned by the great man to

learn to become like everyone else, to say to themselves, as they set foot in this sumptuous Paris and look at each other: "What strikes us most is to see ourselves there".

Having noted the apogee of the Empire, it is still necessary, in order to clarify the historical milieu, to answer these two questions: what idea did people have of Napoleon in these years 1806 and 1807; and what idea did he himself have of his mission in the religious sphere?

France was captivated, and for good reason! His soldiers, accustomed to seeing victory as an article of faith under his command, listened to him with rapt attention, and would listen to no other teaching. In civilian life, the man who sovereignly distributes honors, titles, pensions and kingdoms is the object of such flattery that it can exceed even the master's desires. After Austerlitz, he triumphantly passed through the crowd of petty German princes, and returned to Paris to find unheard-of honors. Artists portrayed him sometimes as a hero, sometimes as a demigod; medals reproduced the adulation of which Louis XIV had been the object. This adulation even crept into the catechism, which imposed love of Napoleon alongside love of God and parents. And what becomes of freedom, transported to the eagles' territory? It has no wings: the fear of this company paralyzes it. And the resistance of spirits? Nil. So the words of the poet Ducis, to whom the Emperor offered a seat in the Senate, are typical: I'm a wild duck, one of those who can smell the rifle from afar. Don't waste your time: I would rather wear rags than chains.

When the timid, supple Hebrews are assembled in Paris, how will they get away with it? It will be a curious spectacle!

But what idea does the Emperor have of himself, and what are his real religious convictions?

Let's not lose sight of the fact that this is 1806, the most brilliant year of the Empire. Napoleon was preoccupied with a single thought, almost a cult: his glory! However, at this date, Napoleon's glory still recognized itself as God's vassal. It has been claimed that, at the height of his reign, he no longer believed himself to be a man, but the invincible, divine hero proclaimed by the poets".²⁴ This assertion seems wrong to us. Napoleon never banished from his mind the idea of God and Providence.²⁵ When he made the mistake, and the crime, of attacking the Pope in an attempt to dominate him, he convinced himself, in his delusion, that he was not attacking religion, still less Divinity. What was he, after all? A deist: as much for political reasons as for religious ones. Born to organize, imbued with the idea of order, he understood the importance of religious sentiment in shaping his Empire, and he never wavered from this fixed idea. In his eyes, religion was the sword's companion in subduing men. Because he was born a Catholic, and because the Catholic Church's strong, unified system suits his genius, he prefers it to other religions; but he finds the titles of other religions respectable, and commands respect for them. What he intends is that religions in their public expression, i.e. cults, should come under his authority as benefactor, organizer and sovereign. He wants to hold the various cults in his hand, just as a chariot driver holds the reins of the carriage. This was Napoleon's religious physiognomy in 1806.

The splendor of the Empire at that date, the delirious admiration the Emperor aroused, the role of repairer, arbiter and sovereign he claimed to exercise with regard to and above religions, were never better interpreted and expressed than within the Jewish Assembly that was about to meet. One of the Emperor's commissioners said of his master: "If some personage from past centuries were to return to the light, and such a spectacle were to strike his eyes, would he not believe himself transported to the walls of the holy city, or would he not think that a terrible revolution has renewed human things down to their very foundations? He wouldn't be mistaken, gentlemen: it's at the end of a revolution that threatened to engulf religions, thrones and empires that altars and thrones are rising up on all sides to protect the earth. A senseless crowd had tried to destroy everything; one man came and repaired it all. The whole world, and the past since its origin, were delivered up to his gaze; he saw scattered over the face of the globe the scattered remains of a nation as famous for its abasement as any people was ever for

its greatness. It was right that he should concern himself with its fate, and it was to be expected that these same Jews, who hold such a high place in the memories of men, would fix the attention of a prince who must forever fill their memory." 26

What can we conclude from this chapter? This:

That the Emperor is loyal in the design he has conceived to correct the morals of the Israelites, to incorporate them into his Empire, and to reconcile them with the peoples. We shall examine later whether his enterprise was in every respect political and prudent: it must be acknowledged here that it was loyal. It was not out of affection for the Jews that he undertook this project: he called them "caterpillars and locusts"; nor was it to harm the Catholic religion: the expression he used, "Il faut assembler les Etats généraux des juifs", proves that he excluded all religious parallels. Mrae de Staël wrote at the time: "Napoleon regards a human creature as a fact or as a thing, but not as a fellow human being. He hates no more than he loves; there is only him for him; all other creatures are ciphers. This assessment of the great man is not without a certain accuracy: it can be extended to his conduct towards religions: Judaism, for him, is just a number, but it finds its place in his calculations.

CHAPTER II

JEWISH PARLIAMENT AND GRAND SANHEDRIN CONVENED IN PARIS (1806-1807).
their appearance and the emperor's leadership. CHAMPAGNY AND MOLÉ

I. Paris' astonishment at the spectacle of Hebrew assemblies. The Assembly of Notables of Israel, July 26, 1806. It was followed by the meeting of the Grand Sanhedrin on February 9, 1807. Physionomy of these two assemblies. -

II The Emperor's purpose in convening these two assemblies: why an Assembly of Notables in the first place, and the Great Sanhedrin in the second? -

III. Learned composition of the Sanhedrin: Napoleon displays all his qualities as a politician. -

IV. The Emperor's military campaign-style direction; curious correspondence with M. de Champagny on the progress of these assemblies. This minister's secret role. -

V. The three imperial commissioners: Mole, Portalis, Pasquier. Jewish blood in young Count Mole's veins: he delivers the opening speech; he forgets to be benevolent. -

VI. Israelite presidents: Furtado, in the chair of the Assembly of Notables; Sinzheim, in the chair of the Grand Sanhedrin. The parties and their disputes. -

VII. Drunkenness and excess in Jewish praise of Napoleon; Scripture misused to authorize flattery; warning of a formidable peril for Israel in the future.

I

After the signing of the Concordat, the Catholic Church had risen in Paris, no longer stained with blood and possessing only the wooden cross, but in pompous apparel and under the shadow of a mighty sword. On Easter Day 1802, an artillery salvo greeted the first Christian feast celebrated since 89; the people enthusiastically heard the sound of bells that had been silent for so long; they flocked to the solemn rites and were happily nourished by the divine word.

Another religious spectacle took Paris by surprise on July 26, 1806, and especially on February 9, 1807. Hebrew assemblies were meeting in the capital. After reaching agreement with the Catholic Church, the Emperor asked the Synagogue to come to an agreement with him.

These Hebrew assemblies were to be of two kinds.

The first, more specifically secular, would bring together the most distinguished Israelites of France and Italy, and would be called the *Assemblée des Notables*; the second, more specifically religious, would include the most eminent rabbis, and would be called the Grand Sanhedrin.

Before indicating the reasons why the Emperor invited these two kinds of Assemblies to sit successively in his capital, and to complement each other, let's sketch their physiognomy, which had the privilege of greatly interesting the Parisian public, to the point where they wondered whether the Seine was not the Jordan, and whether circumcision was not about to be re-established.

The Emperor was looking for effect. The prestige of the extraordinary, which always captures the imagination, was one of the means of his policy. So the Assembly of Notables opened with great pomp and ceremony. One hundred and eleven Israelites, representing the departments of France and Italy, gathered.²⁷ The venue for their sessions was a building attached to the Hôtel de Ville, the former chapel of Saint-Jean; the Minister of the Interior and the Prefect of the Seine had made it available to them. Paris follows the sessions with curiosity. It's a Jewish parliament.

But interest was redoubled, as was the theatrical apparatus, when the Grand Sanhedrin, succeeding the Assembly of Notables, took its turn.

What was the Great Sanhedrin in the first place?

11 There was nothing greater in the ancient republic of the Hebrews than the Sanhedrin.²⁸ It formed the supreme council of the nation. It appears for the first time after the return of the Babylonian captivity, around the time of Machabees; its date is between 170 and 106 BC. A veritable sovereign assembly, the Sanhedrin had, in the last days of Jewish nationality, replaced the monarchy: its authority was therefore considerable, at once doctrinal, judicial and administrative. It interpreted the Law. He judged major cases. It exercised exact supervision over the administration of affairs.²⁹ As for its composition, it consisted of seventy-one members, including the presidents. The seventy-one represented the three classes of the nation: the priests; the scribes or doctors and interpreters of the Law; and the elders, chosen from among the heads of tribes and families.

This famous assembly had never met since the ruin of Jerusalem by Titus. Eighteen hundred years had therefore passed, and it was this assembly that came to Paris, exhumed and mandated by Napoleon. He ordered that all ancient customs be resumed and scrupulously followed.

The venue was the same as for the *Assemblée des Notables*: the former chapel of Saint-Jean, adjacent to the Hôtel de Ville; its austere walls, once home to Catholic worship and now stripped of all ornament, were impressive.

The Sanhedrites number 71, as they did at the time of the Jerusalem sessions.

They wear a severe, dark suit, the same as that worn by the members of the Great Sanhedrin in ancient times. The costume of the chief or president is a black velvet *simarre* with a large belt, a wide flap and a black velvet cap with two horns trimmed with furs; that of the assessors or vice-presidents, a silk *simarre* with belt, a black furred cap and a large flap; that of the rabbis consists of a small coat and the flap; and that of the simple deputies is similar, minus the flap, but the sword.³⁰

Where the faithful tracing of the olden days excites interest to the highest degree is in the naming of the members, as well as the layout of the session room:

The president is called *Nasi*, head or prince of the Sanhedrin;

He has two assessors: the first assessor, seated on his right, is called *Ab-beth-din*, father of the tribunal; the second assessor, seated on his left, is called *Haham*, wise man.³¹

The session room is arranged in a semicircle, as was customary in ancient times. The head and his two assessors occupy the seats of honor at the back; next to them are all their colleagues seated in a single line, in a semicircle, by rank of age, the rabbis first and then the laymen; there are forty-six rabbis and

thirty-four laymen. At each end of the hemicycle is a scribe or secretary.³²

The spectacle of these Sanhedrites is not without grandeur. On entering this Council of the Hebrews, one feels a sense of respect, almost admiration; "the public present at the sessions of the Great Sanhedrin was edified," wrote the imperial commissioners to Napoleon.³³

But it was the members of the Sanhedrin themselves who were most deeply moved. Enthusiasm ran high from the very first session. This had not been the case at the opening of the Assembly of Notables; the deputies had shown themselves to be rather reserved, even fearful: indeed, it was not yet known what the all-powerful master who had convened was getting at*. On the contrary, in the meeting of the Sanhedrin, from the very first session, the bridge of mistrust was crossed, enthusiasm possessed all the spirits, and the leader made himself the interpreter in the following speech:

"Doctors of the Law and Notables of Israel, glorify the Lord.

"The holy Ark, battered by centuries of storms, finally ceases to be agitated.

"The Lord's chosen one has warded off the storm, the Ark is in port.

"O Israel, dry your tears, your God has looked upon you. Touched by your misery, he has come to renew his covenant.

"Thanks be to the liberator of God's people.

"Thanks be to the Hero, forever famous, who enchains human passions, just as he confounds the pride of the nations.

"He lifts up the humble and humbles the proud: a sensitive image of the Divinity, who delights in confounding the vanity of men.

"Minister of eternal justice, all men are equal before him; their rights are immutable.

"Doctors and Notables of Israel, it is to this principle sacred to this Great Man that you owe the happiness of being gathered in assembly to discuss the interests of Israel.

"As I fix my gaze on this Supreme Council, my imagination spans thousands of centuries. I am transported to the time of its institution, and my heart cannot help but feel a certain emotion that you no doubt share with me." ³⁴

But why did the Emperor call on two different kinds of assemblies?

II

Usury had been the occasional cause that had prompted the Emperor's intervention in the Jewish question. But from the moment his thoughts had been drawn to this subject, Napoleon had considered it from that superior and general point of view which gave a character of unusual grandeur to the acts of his government. It was no longer enough for him to seek a remedy against usury; he wanted to eliminate the deep-rooted causes of division that separated the Jews from the mass of the nation, and of which usury itself was a consequence.

But how could this be achieved?

However immense and absolute his power, the Emperor understood that, to transform a stubborn and immobilized people such as the descendants of Abraham, he would be powerless if he relied solely on the use of modern forces. Armed with a keen eye, he also appeals to the Jewish forces themselves. "Help yourselves," he said to those he wanted to regenerate, "and Napoleon will help you." That's why he successively convened two kinds of Assemblies. Indeed:

The first, that of the Notables, expresses Jewish national representation: it is an appeal to the people. The new, revolutionary principle of the sovereignty of the people was applied to Judaism. The Emperor himself explained this in a secret note. Blaming the religious omnipotence of this or that rabbi during the centuries of the Middle Ages, he said: "The right of religious legislation cannot belong to an

individual, it must be exercised by a General Assembly of Jews, legally and freely assembled, and containing within its bosom Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German and French Jews, representing the Jews of more than three-quarters of Europe "35 This assembly of Jewish deputies will be asked questions, their answers will be solicited, and once the answers have been given, they will be sanctioned by a kind of Hebrew Council.

In the Emperor's mind, this Hebrew Council or Sanhedrin was the driving force behind the planned regeneration. The Notables, in fact, or the deputies, are after all no more than individuals, with no authority other than that of their personal merit. But Napoleon wanted to create a more solid base from which to influence the mass of the Jewish population. He sought it in an institution forgotten since ancient times, which was to give the decisions of the Civil Assembly the consecration of religious power.³⁶

It was both logical and bold. How did Napoleon come up with the idea of the Grand Sanhedrin? Presumably, some son of Israel suggested it to him.³⁷

"His Majesty proposes to convene the Great Sanhedrin. This body, which fell with the Temple, is going to REAPPEAR TO ENLIGHTEN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD THE PEOPLE IT GOVERNED. "38

When this announcement was made unexpectedly in the Assembly of Notables, an indescribable emotion seized all the members. It seemed to these descendants of the tribes, whose ever-burning imagination was suddenly refreshed by this surprise, that Jerusalem, the dead city, was already stirring in its shroud!

III

The Assembly of Notables expresses the Jewish national representation, and must help the Emperor in the enterprise of regeneration;

The Grand Sanhedrin would be the consecration of the Jewish religion's entry into the world.

This was the Emperor's thinking, and also the gradation.

But Napoleon did not let the two assemblies be formed at random, nor at will; having determined their *raison d'être* and their gradation, he wanted to be sure of their elements, i.e. to secure a devoted majority in both Assemblies.

Success was easy enough in the composition of the Assembly of Notables. Instead of having them appointed – by all the Israelites of France and Italy, he had them sovereignly appointed by the prefects.

But, as is well known, the prefects did not make the mistake of choosing the Israelites most hostile to the Emperor's wishes.

But it was in the composition of the Grand Sanhedrin that Napoleon particularly displayed his qualities as a politician. The Minister of the Interior, who was then M. de Champagny, had proposed to His Majesty that this second Jewish assembly be composed of entirely new men, as is the practice for the two Chambers of a country, where the men of the upper Chamber are not those of the lower Chamber, and vice versa. This proposal seemed rational enough. The Emperor didn't like it: "It's not a happy thought 4," he wrote to M. Champagny; and then he proved to his minister that the already captivated members of the Assembly of Notables should contribute to making captures in the Great Sanhedrin, exactly as birds already deprived contribute to making other still wild birds captive. Fifteen to seventeen rabbis had found rank in the Assembly of Notables. They are therefore carefully preserved for the Sanhedrin, along with other tamed lay Notables 1 2. Thirty new rabbis, called from different parts of the Empire, hastened to accede to the call. The Emperor was assured of a majority in both assemblies: once the Notables had said amen to the Imperial proposals, the Sanhedrites would add allelaia.

IV

It was not enough for the ever far-sighted Napoleon to have composed the two Jewish assemblies as he saw fit.

Interfering in Hebrew affairs was the last temptation that ever came to a statesman. Not only does it require a great deal of prior knowledge, but there's nothing cheerful or attractive about it. But the great captain has no doubts: he will lead these Hebrews like an army corps. He has already prescribed two stages: the Assembly of Notables, then the Sanhedrin. He then selected the best Jews from the Jewish communities, as one would select soldiers from the best troops. All that's left for him to do is to command: he will command.

The collection of all these hardheads made no mistake about the military direction that awaited them, and they were careful not to put up any resistance. It was well known that the man who, on 18 Brumaire, had said to the Conseil des Anciens: Consider that I walk accompanied by the god of fortune and the god of war, wanted to be obeyed in legislation, obeyed as Moses had been when he came down from Sinai, and better than him! The old beards of Ephraim and Issachar understood this with ease. It had been said of Bonaparte: "It's not just as a generalissimo of the army that he begins, it's as a master. Old generals shudder before the adolescent warrior. They can't stand the brief words that question them, the gaze that pierces them, the will that subjugates them. They feel both attracted and restrained. They fall in line, they admire, they remain silent, they obey, and the rest of the army with them." All the more reason for our timid, supple Hebrews to line up, admire, keep quiet and obey!

But Napoleon understood perfectly well the need to soften his rugged warrior looks. The political issue here is entangled with a religious one; and, what's more, the Jewish people are not as easy to lead as other peoples. This is why, skilful in "casting" his will, Caesar adopts two ways of directing these Hebrew assemblies: one official, represented by three commissioners who will bring before the deputies the expression of his will; but the other unofficial, which will prepare and soften the imperative mission of the three commissioners.

This shadowy leadership was entrusted to M. de Champagny.

M. de Champagny, then Minister of the Interior, was blindly devoted to Napoleon, who for his part held him in particular esteem for his rare qualities of sagacity, patience and self-sacrifice. A future negotiator for the Emperor's marriage to Marie-Louise, he was to prove his worth by negotiating a compromise between the young Caesar and the old Synagogue. He was therefore chosen by Napoleon to act as his secret strategist on the Jewish question, and to pave the way for the success of his regeneration plans. To this end, he sent him letters and explanatory notes, precious documents which, now published, prove that the Emperor conducted the Hebrew question in the manner of a military campaign. To spare the self-esteem of their nationals, Israelite historians have reported that the Assembly of Notables and the Great Sanhedrin sat in full possession of their enlightenment and freedom. This was not the case. They were subjected to the imperial will in substance and form, in outline and in detail, with the exception of the article on marriages, as will be described below. The correspondence between Napoleon and M. de Champagny testifies to the extent to which the Emperor had matured his campaign plan. He left nothing to the unforeseen, nor to the discretion of the Jews. They will sit for as many days as their imperial regulator allows. They will respond as he prescribes. The Sovereign writes in these terms to M. de Champagny:

Rambouillet, March 13, 1806.

Monsieur Champagny, I am sending you some notes which will make you aware of the direction I wish to give to the assembly of Jews, and what the commissioners of this assembly have to do at the moment. With this, I pray God to have you in his holy care.
Napoleon.

These notes can be classified as follows:

Instructions given by the Emperor to establish a bridge between the Assembly of Notables and the Great Sanhedrin 1 ;

Instructions for securing the votes of the rabbis, and forcing the surrender of those who would show themselves to be disrespectful 1 2;

Instructions, to find in the Law of Moses itself an illuminating principle which would subjugate all the Jews of the world, persuading them that they could reconcile their new duties as citizens with their ancient beliefs 1. This was the masterpiece of strategy. Napoleon delved into the Law of Moses and extracted a principle that forced the Jews to make themselves prisoners in their own biblical territory. We explain this strategy in the next chapter.

M. de Champagny is the confidant of these projects, receiving notes and instructions and communicating them to those concerned. He is like the engineer in charge of laying out the mines that will shatter old habits. He also brings the master's lessons to us, so that we learn them and take care not to change a single iota in public.

V

The three government commissioners, on the other hand, express the Emperor's official direction. They were three members of the Conseil d'Etat: Messrs Molé, Portalis and Pasquier.

Following Napoleon's express recommendations, the commissioners asked "that a committee of nine members be formed, chosen from among the most enlightened Israelites in the Assembly, with whom they could work and bring about great results 1 2 ". This Committee of Nine, on the one hand, and these three commissioners, on the other, constitute a kind of general staff at the head of which Napoleon will maneuver.

One of the qualities of Napoleon's genius was his ability to take the initiative at all times. That's why he appointed three commissioners to make his wishes known as he went along. Through them, he will first express his opinion as a decision.

On every subject, he has knowledge and ideas, or forms them easily: this is another quality of his genius. In this Hebrew question, which he has not encountered in Plutarch's Lives, if he lacks any knowledge, he will immediately obtain it from this Committee of Nine, through the intermediary of its commissioners.

The choice of the three commissioners, made with extreme skill, is consistent with a staging of feelings that Napoleon deploys as military resources. The Emperor excelled at both seduction and intimidation. Seduction and intimidation were two means of success he employed to great effect. The commissioners he chose admirably express this seduction and intimidation, which would serve him well with the reunited Jews.

One, in fact, was Portalis, in charge of the administration of worship, full of tact and experience. It was he who negotiated the Concordat. By moving him from talks with the Church to talks with the

Synagogue, Napoleon showed how much he valued the Hebrews³⁹ Portalis would serve to seduce them.⁴⁰

But with the young Count Molé, he intimidated them. Molé was only twenty-six, proud and superb. The qualities of his mind and the distinction of his person appealed to the Emperor, to whom M. de Font ânes, Grand Master of the University, introduced him, and he was appointed Maître des requêtes at the Conseil d'Etat. The Emperor judged him suitable for the role of intimidator, and he was not mistaken. It is said that he was chosen for another reason: Molé has Abrahamic blood in his veins. "It was not without design that the Emperor had chosen the young Molé, a descendant of the famous Keeper of the Seals, and whose other ancestor, First President Mathieu Molé, had married, on September 22, 1733, the daughter of the rich and famous Jewish banker Samuel, comte de Coubert. "⁴¹ The presence of this brilliant young figure, of Israelite blood, was an incentive to encourage the Jews in the Assembly to merge into the French nationality. On the other hand, there can be little doubt that the young Count would have preferred this particularity of his origins to have been forgotten. For he showed himself to be hard on this gathering of Israelites, and commanded them with haughtiness.⁴² If Napoleon thought of Moses in giving laws to the Synagogue, Molé, in the Emperor's hand, perfectly recalled his rod.

Flanked by the other two commissioners, he opened the Assembly of Notables with these words:

"Gentlemen,

"His Majesty the Emperor and King, having appointed us as his commissioners to deal with matters that concern you, has sent us here today to inform you of his intentions. Called from the extremities of this vast Empire, none of you is unaware of the object for which His Majesty has wished to bring you together.

"As you know, the conduct of several members of your religion has aroused complaints which have reached the foot of the Throne: these complaints were well-founded, and yet the Emperor was content to suspend the progress of the evil, and wanted to hear from you on the means of curing it. You will undoubtedly merit such paternal kindness, and feel what a lofty mission has been entrusted to you. Far from considering the government under which you live as a power from which you have to defend yourselves, you will think only of enlightening it, of cooperating with it in the good it is preparing; and thus, by showing that you have known how to profit from the experience of all Frenchmen, you will prove that you do not isolate yourselves from other men.

"The laws that have been imposed on individuals of your religion have varied all over the world. They have often been dictated by the interests of the moment. But, just as this assembly has no precedent in the history of Christianity, so, for the first time, you will be judged justly, and your fate will be determined by a Christian prince. His Majesty wants you to be French; it's up to you to accept such a title, and to consider that it would be to renounce it not to make yourselves worthy of it.

"We are going to read you some questions addressed to you. Your duty is to tell the whole truth about each of them. We say it to you today, and we'll say it to you again and again: when a monarch as firm as he is just, who knows everything equally well, rewards everything equally well and punishes everything equally well, questions his subjects, they, by not answering frankly, would be making themselves as guilty as they would be showing themselves blind to their true interests.

"His Majesty wanted you to enjoy the greatest freedom in your deliberations: as your answers are drafted, your president will make them known to us.

"As for us, our most ardent wish is to be able to inform the Emperor that he counts among his subjects of the Jewish religion only those who are faithful and determined to conform in everything to the laws and morals that all Frenchmen must follow and practice. "⁴³

The deputies had been warned. Beneath the calculated vagueness of the commissioner's language, the

master's firm and decisive will was clearly perceptible.⁴⁴

The Israelite historian Graetz says of the young Count's opening speech: "Molé's address was excessively cold and, in part, hurtful." ⁴⁵

VI

We now know the great captain's maneuver:

Questions, kept secret, are going to be put to Judaism;

Two Jewish assemblies have been convened, one civil, to discuss, or rather, to accept what the Emperor will propose in these matters; the other, religious, to consecrate it doctrinally.

The prefects of the Empire have chosen the most flexible notables and the most open-minded rabbis in the départements;

M. de Champagny made his master's thoughts and wishes known unofficially in the groups;

The three government commissioners, MM. Molé, Portalis and Pasquier, expressed them officially:

Here is the evolution of Napoleon and his staff;

What is the corresponding attitude of the two Assemblies?

Above all, our attention must be drawn to the two figures occupying the chair of presidency, one in the Assembly of Notables, the other in the Great Sanhedrin.

Elected by a plurality of votes, the president of the Notables is Abraham Furtado, and that of the Sanhedrin, David Sinzheim.

Abraham Furtado was descended from one of those Israelite families in Portugal who carefully hid the secret of their beliefs, in order to practice, in the depths of the most obscure underground passages, the principal ceremonies of their ancestors' cult. Still in the womb of his mother, who lived in Lisbon, he lost his father in that city's famous earthquake disaster of 1755. His mother was buried under the rubble of a house, and remained there for a whole day. Soldiers who happened to be passing by pulled her from beneath the ruins; she made her way to London, where she gave birth to Abraham. Furtado returned to Bordeaux, grew tall and rich, and devoted himself entirely to his studies. Malesherbes had called him into his council when – on the orders of Louis XVI – the question of the entry of Israelites into society had been examined for the first time. And now, Napoleon still preferred to consult him, when it came time to give this bitter and difficult question its definitive solution. His co-religionists in the Assembly of Notables therefore elected him to the presidency. He possessed rare eloquence and exquisite tact in the management of affairs. The beauty of his organ, the nobility of his features, the majesty of his bearing, all added to the impression he made.⁴⁶

David Sinzheim, elected president of the Grand Sanhedrin, was a rabbi in Strasbourg. All his co-religionists revered him for his age, his character, his great gentleness, his knowledge and his piety. To his patriarchal physiognomy he added the advantage of being the brother-in-law of the famous Cerfberr; Cerfberr was dead, but the memory of his credit with Louis XVI, of his struggles with Strasbourg, of his labors for the cause of Israel, remained imperishable: it was reflected in the votes given to his relative. The president of the Sanhedrin was also considered the strongest Talmudist of his time.

The Israelite historian Graetz, however, expresses a reservation in the midst of his praise: "David Sinzheim was very well versed in the knowledge of the Talmud, but he lacked depth of mind" ⁴⁷.

Around these two names, Furtado and Sinzheim, shine and gravitate other illustrations:

The first assessor to the Great Sanhedrin was Rabbi Segré of Vercel;

The second assessor is Rabbi Cologna of Mantua;

Beer Isaac Berr, the Israelite from Nancy whose role was so remarkable before the Constituent

Assembly, continues to make a great impression here: he competed with the eminent Furtado for the

chair of the Notables;

Avigdor and Michel Berr, in charge of the minutes, write with talent.

But, between these pale faces, between these old brains so long in agreement, for the first time, divergences were openly acknowledged. Stirred up by the philosophy of the XVth century, they would only increase and divide Israel into two camps; they concerned Talmudic customs. There is the party of the pious, who cling to them. There is the party of progressives who want them sacrificed on the altar of the new adopted homeland. Two rites are also present, which cannot stand each other: the German rite and the German rite, like Jerusalem and Samaria in the past. Finally, the secular element stands up to the rabbinical element: a perfidious novelty introduced into Israel by Napoleon. At times, discussions threatened to become very heated within the two Jewish Chambers.⁴⁸ But this thought: "They listen to us at the gates, they look at us at the windows," led to an easy concentration of opinions. The advice once given by Joseph to his brothers on their way from Egypt to the land of Chanaan to bring their old father there: "Do not quarrel on the way "⁴⁹ has always hovered over Hebrew assemblies and conciliabula. At the Sanhedrin of Paris, a sort of high road where the Israelites were on their way to enter their new civil homeland, they quarreled; but the bond of race, aided by Joseph's recommendation, ensured that agreement prevailed. And then, the Emperor waits!...

VII

This formidable personality was well suited to forcing harmony in his presence. Unity in obsequiousness and adulation was complete among our Hebrews. It's unbelievable how much they flattered. In the future, one of their most complete historians will put all his care into freeing Israel from this disgusting idolatry⁵⁰ ; but it remains a fact that in this period, from the victories of Marengo and Austerlitz to the peace of Tilsitt, Israel was literally fascinated. It's fair to say that we had before us the example of half of Europe kneeling before Napoleon, and calling him a demigod. But there is a serious peculiarity in the adulations that came out of the Jewish Assemblies: they diverted and applied to Napoleon expressions and figures exclusively reserved for the Messiah, and lowered before him the majesty of the Scriptures⁵¹ Let us judge:

The Assembly of Notables held its sessions. The anniversary of Napoleon's birth (August 15) arrived. A sort of intoxication seized the Assembly. The Paris Synagogue was transformed into a pagan temple,⁵² with the Emperor's portrait hung, surrounded by flowers; and then speeches and odes were delivered, with incense replacing that which had not been burned since leaving Jerusalem. Shades of the old Prophets, you must have shuddered to hear that the Scriptures were being twisted to authorize flattery! Rabbi Segré, deputy of the department of Sésia, says:

Hardly had the first rays of dawn lit my eyes this morning, when the victories of Montenotte, the palms and laurels of Marengo, the glorious exploits and triumphs of Austerlitz were already crowding my thoughts. This is no dream," I exclaimed, "there has truly appeared on earth a supernatural genius, surrounded by infinite grandeur and glory:

And behold, with the clouds of heaven came the Son of Man:

And the Ancient of Days gave him power, honor and the kingdom.

(Daniel, vII, 13.)

This day of universal joy and gladness, marked by the stars in indelible characters, is already being reborn and shines forth; a day, more than any other, pure and serene; a day forever happy when heaven gave the earth I great Napoleon⁵³.

It's Daniel, prophesying the majesty of the Son of Man, i.e. the Messiah, who is thus bent to Napoleon's praise.

Rabbi Sinzheim, deputy of Strasbourg, says:

Text (Isaiah, ch. XLif). This is my servant, in whose defense I will stand; this is my chosen one, in whom my soul is well pleased. I will pour out my spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations; he will not be sad or hasty when he exercises his judgment on earth, and the islands will wait for his law. I am the Lord who has preserved you, who has established you to be the reconciler of the people and the light of the nations.

... He has chosen Napoleon to place him on the throne of France and Italy; we must apply to him the words of my text: I will pour out my spirit on him.

And indeed, consider his marvellous works, his first campaigns in Italy, his exploits in Asia and Africa, his second campaigns in Italy, and finally his astonishing campaigns in Germany, and that forever memorable battle of Austerlitz, of which the brilliant peace of Presbourg was the fruit. Could we hesitate for a moment to apply Isaiah's verse to our invincible Emperor? Of him too, should we not say: This is what the Lord said to Cyrus: I have taken him by the hand to subdue the nations, to put kings to flight, to open all the gates before him, and none shall be shut against him. I will go before you, I will level the mountains and hills, I will break the gates of bronze. Wasn't this how our invincible Emperor crossed that reputedly inaccessible mountain, the Saint-Bernard, to win the immortal victory at Marengo? The Lord smoothed all obstacles before him, and he penetrated enemy countries; he broke the gates of bronze, that fortress of Ulm, lined with fortifications. This fortress was occupied by an innumerable army, but as soon as the Lord's chosen one appears, we see fulfilled what Isaiah says (xli, il): All those who fight against you will be crushed; all those who oppose you will come to nothing and perish.

Distant islands await his laws; by bringing nations together, he enlightens them as to their true interests!

54

It is Isaiah, also speaking of the Messiah, who, in turn, is bent on praising Napoleon.

Rabbi Abraham Cologna, deputy from Mantua, reads an ode in Hebrew; these stanzas are applauded:

To immortal thoughts I will lift my spirit; my hymns will celebrate deeds of inconceivable greatness.

Oh, may I, at the sacred springs, find sweet honeycombs for my words! May they at once be clothed in pleasantness, brilliance and strength!

It is of the greatest of monarchs that I shall sing of his exploits, of a mortal whose greatness no one has yet equalled. All princes before him seem to me stripped of their lustre; their greatness before his is no more, and vanishes into nothingness.

Where would one begin to celebrate the deeds of the man who, in the temple of memory, has engraved so many wonders! Who could recount his victories, his prodigies! or rather, who could fix the number of stars in the firmament, and who, without being dazzled, could look at the star of the day!

It is in the happiness of governing with equity that he has placed the delights of his heart; until the distant centuries, the name of father of the peoples will be shared with him. He has engraved their perpetual happiness on the tablets of his laws; the legislator's crown, the triumphant laurels, decorate his brow with equal grace.⁵⁵

If these stanzas express the right ideas, great men of Jewish antiquity, Abraham, Moses, David, and you, Messiah, announced by them, all rank below Napoleon: this is the place awarded to you by the Israelite Parliament of France!

So much for the Chamber of Notables.

The Sanhedrin was no more measured. Incidentally, the same men rewarded for their praise at the Notables,⁵⁶ reappeared.

Rabbi Cologna, now assessor or vice-president of the Sanhedrin, says in his opening speech:

It is true, then, that the prodigious genius of the immortal Napoleon, an emanation of the vivifying

spirit of Eternal Wisdom, recalls to a new existence the withered and disunited members of the remnants of a people as famous for its misfortunes as it had been for its former glory!

... This creative genius, which among mortals is best formed in the image of God, follows in its sublime footsteps. "57

Is flattery sickening enough?

Rabbi Sinzheim, now president of the Great Sanhedrin, says in the closing speech:

... The Lord has kept his promise; he has said from the top of his holy dwelling: Who is he who will come to the aid of my people?... Who is he who will protect them from their oppressors? I have named him my chosen one; my will has chosen him to be the ruler of the nations and to shower his blessings on mankind. The hero whose salvation and covenant the peoples of the earth will seek will be Israel's liberator; the hero who will overthrow the throne of the superb and raise up that of the humble is the same one I have destined to raise the descendants of ancient Jacob from the dust. I reserve for my people a protector great in wisdom, great in deeds, great in enlightenment, great in virtue. I have called him, I have sanctified him; and all nations will know by his works that I have not reprov'd my people, nor withdrawn my affections from the midst of Israel.⁵⁸

And again :

... And you, Napoleon, you the beloved, you the idol of France and Italy, you the terror of superiors, the comforter of mankind, the support of the afflicted, the father of all peoples, the chosen of the Lord, Israel is raising a temple in its heart; all its thoughts will be constantly directed towards all that can fill your happiness.

Dispose, yes, dispose entirely of the lives and feelings of those you have just made your children, by making them share in all the prerogatives of your most faithful subjects.⁵⁹

How much lower can the Divinity go?

It should be noted that all these praises, desecrated from the Scriptures, were bestowed by rabbis. The president of the Assembly of Notables, Mr. Furtado, a layman, merely compared Napoleon to a fable god!⁶⁰

A grave lesson must be drawn from this excessive praise and profaned incense:

The dazzling splendor of Napoleon's reign at that time, the helping hand he extended to the Jews, the lustre with which he even wanted to wrap them by the resurrection of the Great Sanhedrin, treating them as a people who must have, like others, its great assemblies; All these novelties, all these benefits must have turned the heads of the deputies of so many hitherto humiliated synagogues, and made them, out of gratitude, go beyond the bounds of praise; this intoxication was to be expected, and it would be unjust to deny it extenuating circumstances. But what cannot be excused is the attribution to Napoleon of the great and holy expressions which the Bible uses with regard to the Messiah. Blind people and sons of the blind, who, having once failed to recognize the Messiah where he was, are once again deliriously excited to seek him where he will never be! Doctrinaire exegetes and serious authors have expressed this fear, unfortunately well-founded: that the Jews, before turning for good to the God made man, Christ promised to their fathers, will allow themselves to be seduced one last time by the formidable personality who is to be the Antichrist. Indeed, if a conqueror were to appear with the same string of victories as Napoleon, if this conqueror were to protect the Jews, if he were to repeat the Emperor's kindnesses and seductions, if he were to surpass them, would not the fascination begin anew, and would not the Scriptures once again be profaned? The popular imagination, in its fearful visions of Antichrist, imagines him with horns, and lavishes him with ugliness: be deceived, the man of evil will have all the seductions.⁶¹

Israelites, you were unable to restrain yourselves with regard to Napoleon: will you restrain yourselves better before the formidable temporal king you still dream of?

CHAPTER III

THE WORK OF THE TWO ASSEMBLIES SERVILITY, RESISTANCE, SINCERITY

I The imperial questionnaire: twelve questions officially posed by Count Molé to the Jewish Assemblies.

II. M. de Champagny's lesson to the deputies the day before, instructing them on how to answer. –

III. Solemn preamble to the answers: the Assembly of Notables places the Law of Moses below the Napoleonic Code; and the Sanhedrin, on the Emperor's secret order, divides the Mosaic Law into two parts, one of which is declared inapplicable and obsolete. –

IV. Responses from the Assembly of Notables to the imperial questionnaire; the lesson is obediently repeated; but the Emperor fails on the question of mixed marriages. –

V. The Great Sanhedrin sanctions the Notables' responses and continues their inflexibility on the question of mixed marriages. Enumeration of doctrinal decisions, removed at the double. –

VI. Correspondence loyal to Napoleon's design. Sincerity of Israelite responses on love of country, usury, military service. Magnificent tribute of gratitude paid by the Assembly of Notables to the Papacy and the Catholic Clergy of all centuries. –

VII The Emperor's satisfaction with the outcome of the sessions.

I

The young Count Molé, followed by the two other commissioners, Portalis and Pasquier, entered the Assembly of Notables at the start of the second session (July 29), a paper in his hand;

It was an imperial questionnaire.

Before reading it out, he began, in an opening speech with which we are already familiar (see above, pages 50–52), with a warning that presented the yoke to the Assembly, pretending to believe in its independence. Let's recall this lovely passage:

"Your duty is to make known the whole truth about each of them. We say it to you today, and we'll say it again and again: when a monarch as firm as he is just, who knows everything equally well, rewards everything equally well and punishes everything equally well, questions his subjects, the latter, by not answering frankly, would make themselves as guilty as they would be blind to their true interests. His Majesty wants you to enjoy the greatest freedom in your deliberations."

What's in the questionnaire?

Posed to the Assembly by the Emperor and King, the questions were twelve in number:

1° Is it lawful for Jews to marry several wives?

2° Is divorce permitted by the Jewish religion?

Is divorce valid without being pronounced by the courts, and under laws contradictory to those of the French Code?

3° Can a Jew marry a Christian, and a Christian a Jew?

Or is it Jewish law that Jews should only marry each other?

4° In Jewish eyes, are the French their brothers, or are they foreigners?

5° What does the law prescribe with regard to French people who are not of their religion?

6° Do French Jews regard France as their homeland?

Are they obliged to defend it?

Are they obliged to obey the laws and follow the provisions of the Civil Code?

7° Who appoints the rabbis?

8° What are their functions?

9° Is their authority based solely on custom?

10° Are several professions forbidden to Jews?

11° Is usury legally permitted?

12° Is usury permitted with regard to foreigners?⁶²

These twelve questions, if we are careful, referred to four groups:

The first three dealt with polygamy, divorce and marriages between Israelites and Christians;

The next three dealt with relationships authorized by Hebrew law between Israelites and French;

Questions 7, 8 and 9 dealt with the internal organization of the Israelites;

The last questions dealt more specifically with matters relating to trade.

II

"Sa Majesté veut que vous jouissiez de la plus grande liberté dans vos délibérations," Count Molé had just said, with pompous complacency and imperturbable composure.

Now, the day before and the days before, M. de Champagny, that secret preparer or appariteur of the Jewish question whose role we sketched above (p. 45-46), had taken all measures to ensure the triumph of the program he had received from his master, in confidential notes.

These notes contained, in addition to the questionnaire just read out by Count Molé, the answers to be given by Messieurs les Juifs. The contrast between the Government Commissioner's encouragement of freedom, and the imperative results to be obtained, is piquant;

The notes read:

First question. – Is it lawful for Jews to marry several wives? (The negative answer must be stated positively, and V Assembly, constituted as a Grand Sanhedrin, must defend polygamy in Europe).

Second question. – Is divorce permitted by the Jewish religion? Is divorce valid, without it being pronounced by the courts, and by virtue of laws contradictory to those of the French Code? (The Assembly must forbid divorce, except in cases permitted by civil law in the Napoleonic Code, and that it can only take place after it has been pronounced by civil authority).

Third question. – Can a Jew marry a Christian, and a Christian a Jew? Or is it Jewish law that Jews should only marry each other? (The Great Sanhedrin must declare that religious marriages can only take place after being pronounced by the civil authorities, and that Jewish men and women can marry French men and women. The chief rabbis should even recommend such unions, as a means of protection and convenience for the Jewish people).

Sixth question. – Do French Jews regard France as their homeland? Are they obliged to defend it? (The Sanhedrin must declare that Jews must defend France as they would defend Jerusalem, etc.).

Seventh question. – Who appoints the rabbis? (The Sanhedrin must decide⁶³..., etc.)

Are they shiny enough, all those il faut? They look like cannons, not of the Church, but of steel, placed at the head of each question of the Hebrew Council, and ready to thread rabbis and deputies!

"His Majesty wants you to enjoy the greatest freedom in your deliberations," Count Molé had just declared;

"You must... you must... you must respond in such a way

nière, " enjoignait Sa Majesté à M. de Champagny; et celui-ci a pris toutes ses mesures pour que la leçon,

faite par lui, en particulier, aux différents groupes, soit bien retenue.

O liberty, born of the Revolution and raised in Caesar's palace, how remarkable your two foreheads are!
and how promising your future!

III

The measures, as we have said, are well taken. Indeed, wishing above all to secure an advantageous position and a fixed point of operation, the Emperor again gave this order, in his secret notes, to M. de Champagny:

"To march in a regular manner, it would be necessary to declare that there are in the laws of Moses religious provisions and political provisions; that the religious provisions are immutable, but that it is not the same for the political provisions which are subject to modification.... After the declaration of this principle will come its application."64

Forcing the Jews to capitulate on their own territory and abandon their old ways, by splitting the Law of Moses into two portions, one of which would be declared inapplicable and obsolete, would this not be Napoleon's masterpiece of strategy in his Hebraic campaign? In his secret notes to M. de Champagny, he wrote: "We must remove from the laws of Moses everything that is intolerant65...".

Will our Hebrews lend themselves to this strategy?

First, the Assembly of Notables. It is holding its third session (August 4, 1806). The imperial questionnaire is to be answered. But a solemn declaration preceded the answers. What did this declaration proclaim?

"The Assembly, deeply imbued with sentiments of gratitude, love, respect and admiration for the sacred person of His Imperial and Royal Majesty, declares, in the name of the French who profess the religion of Moses, that, to make themselves worthy of the benefits His Majesty is preparing for them, they intend to conform to His paternal will; that their religion commands them to regard as supreme law the law of the Prince in civil and political matters; that therefore, even if their religious Code or the interpretations given to it contained civil or political provisions which were not in harmony with the French Code, these provisions would cease to govern them, since they must above all recognize and obey the law of the Prince."66

As a result, the Law of Moses was placed below the Napoleonic Code. Judaism placed itself at Caesar's discretion. This submission to the Prince's law, expressed with such ardor, recalls Bossuet's reflection:

"What have you done, O ungrateful people?... Remember the words of your fathers: We have no king but Caesar. The Messiah will not be your king; guard well what you have chosen: remain the slave of Caesar and of kings until the fullness of the Gentiles has entered, and all Israel is saved."67

From the Assembly of Notables, we now enter the Sanhedrin:

The 71 are seated in a semicircle, as in Jerusalem. They will preface their doctrinal decisions with a preamble: will it be more independent than the declaration of the Notables?

History, lend an ear, and record:

Preamble to the Decrees

"Blessed be forever the Lord God of Israel, who has placed on the throne of France and the kingdom of Italy a Prince after his own heart.

"God saw the abasement of the descendants of ancient Jacob, and chose Napoleon the Great to be the instrument of his mercy.

"The Lord judges thoughts, he alone commands consciences, and his beloved Anointed One has allowed everyone to worship the Lord according to their belief and faith.

"Under the shadow of His name, security has entered our hearts and our homes; and we can now build,

sow, reap, cultivate the human sciences, belong to the great family of the State, serve it and glory in its noble destinies.

"His high wisdom allowed this Assembly, famous in our annals and whose decisions were dictated by experience and virtue, to reappear after fifteen centuries and contribute to its benefits for Israel.

"Gathered today under his powerful protection in his good city of Paris, seventy-one of us, doctors of the law and notables of Israel, we constitute ourselves into a great Sanhedrin, in order to find in ourselves the means and the strength to render religious ordinances in conformity with the principles of our holy laws, and which serve as a rule and an example to all Israelites.

"These ordinances will teach the nations that our dogmas are reconciled with the civil laws under which we live, and do not separate us from the society of men.

"Consequently, let us declare:

"That divine law, the precious heritage of our ancestors, contains both religious and political provisions;

"That the religious provisions are, by their nature, absolute and independent of circumstances and times;

"That the same is not true of the political provisions, i.e. those which constitute the Government, and which were intended to govern the people of Israel in Palestine when they had their kings, pontiffs and magistrates;

"That these political provisions cannot be applicable since it no longer forms a body of a nation... "68

Except for the somewhat emphatic tone of the preamble, this is a word-for-word repetition of the lesson given the day before by M. de Champagny according to the Emperor's secret instructions, and scrupulously retained by the 71.

The Emperor's strategy had succeeded: the Jews had capitulated on their own territory, the Bible had been split up: the rest would be granted almost without resistance.

IV

One author has said, with a touch of irony: "The Israelite deputies knew in which direction they had to answer in order to be agreeable, and, as they were for the most part very distinguished men and raised far above vulgar prejudices, it is safe to assume that their answers, in conformity with Napoleon's wishes, were also in conformity with their personal conviction. "69

There were therefore twelve questions. We shall not reproduce, for fear of tiring the reader, the long dissertations that came out of the Assembly of Notables: it will suffice to enumerate the precise answers, to note that each notable had well retained the lesson given in particular, and that to the glowing *II faut*, consigned in the secret instructions to M. de Champagny, corresponded, in the ranks of the Assembly, *amen* lined up and sounded like weapons being presented to a military leader!

The Assembly decided, in accordance with French law:

Monogamy;

The validity of divorce, only with the consent of the country's courts;

The right to marry Christians;

The French are the brothers of the French Jews;

There is no difference in the way we treat co-religionists or fellow Christians;

France is our homeland;

The method of electing rabbis is not determined;

Their influence is based on custom;

They have no authority;

No profession is forbidden;

Usury is contrary to the Mosaic Law; it is shameful.

In this punctilious adherence to the Emperor's views, there was, however, one reservation, almost a resistance, which does honor to the blood of Abraham: this was on the question of mixed marriages. Napoleon had said in his notes to M. de Champagny: Jews must be allowed to marry French men and women. The chief rabbis must even recommend such unions as a means of protection and convenience for the Jewish people⁷⁰ Now, when the Assembly of Notables came to examine this third question, a great many members, especially the rabbis, became very irritated, and the course of Abraham's blood was about to become murky in their eyes, like a river that receives tributaries. The rabbis wanted to give the decision alone, to the exclusion of the laity, because "just as when it comes to deciding astronomical points, one addresses astronomers alone, so one must leave to theologians all that has to do with Religion *71;" and the German rabbis in particular demanded that the decision be of inexorable rigor "because they felt great anxieties of conscience on this question which was aimed at Judaism at its heart 1,272." The terrible Caesar, however, could not be told outright no. They replied: "That the religious law absolutely prohibited marriage only with the seven Canaanite nations, Amon and Moab (in the past), and the idolaters (in the present); that modern nations are not idolaters, since they worship one God; that several mixed marriages had taken place, at different times, between Jews and Christians in France, Spain and Germany; but that rabbis would no more bless the marriage of a Christian to a Jew, or a Jewess to a Christian, than Catholic priests would bless such unions 373. "

The response was not lacking in cleverness.

The Emperor, satisfied with the answers on everything else, was not at all displeased with the failure on mixed marriages: he flattered himself that he would make amends with the Great Sanhedrin.

V

The role and function of the Grand Sanhedrin, in Napoleon's mind, was to translate the decisions of the Notables into doctrinal decrees, thus crowning the work of Hebrew national representation with the sanction and prestige of religion.

From a purely human point of view, this gradation in the undertaking was both skilful and grand, as we have already noted (page 41).

The Sanhedrin prepared to be docile, like the Assembly of Notables, to imperial views and lessons; but, remarkably and honorably, the Sanhedrites continued the Notables' inflexibility on the question of mixed marriages. This inflexibility saved Abraham's blood. It was providential. This blood, which Providence had protected against all human passions and the invasions of ancient peoples into the tents of Israel, in order to bring out the Messiah, was still being protected against the attacks of the Revolution and the aims of a superb potentate who thought only of mixing and merging. O Caesar, you have your star, but Israel has its destinies: they must lead it to the last evening of the world, and it is important that its blood remain unmixed, so that it can answer: present! and be recognized without difficulty, when the God of battles calls it as supreme reserve! All Napoleon could obtain from the Sanhedrin was to avert the anathema of mixed marriages: they would not be blessed by the rabbis, but neither would they be anathematized by them.

With the exception of this essential article, everything else the Emperor demanded was voted for and removed at the double. Napoleon was in the habit of giving those he wanted to subjugate no time for reflection. Eight sessions were devoted to new, impromptu legislation that turned the Law of Moses on its head. For the Decalogue alone, the great legislator of the Hebrews had spent forty days on Sinai: the new legislators were given only thirty days by the Emperor, during which eight sessions were held, from February 9 to March 2 (1807)... Here are their decrees, presented here in their substantive conclusions.

DOCTRINAL DECISIONS

I. Polygamy. – 11 Israelites in all states where polygamy is prohibited by civil law, and in particular those in the Empire of France and the Kingdom of Italy, are forbidden to marry a second wife during the lifetime of the first, unless a divorce from the latter, pronounced in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Code and followed by a religious divorce, has freed them from the bonds of marriage.

II Repudiation. – It is expressly forbidden for any rabbi in the two States of France and the Kingdom of Italy to lend his ministry to any act of repudiation or divorce, unless the civil judgment pronouncing it has been shown to him in due form. Any rabbi who allows himself to violate the present religious statute will be considered unworthy to exercise its functions in the future.

III. Marriage. – It is forbidden for any Rabbi or other person in the two States of France and Italy, to lend their ministry to the religious act of marriage, without it having previously appeared to them of the act of the spouses before the civil officer, in accordance with the law. – Marriages between Israelites and Christians, contracted in accordance with the laws of the Civil Code, are obligatory and civilly valid; and, although they may not be clothed in religious forms, they will not entail any anathema.

IV. Brotherhood. – The Great Sanhedrin orders all Israelites in the French Empire and the Kingdom of Italy, and in all other places, to live with the subjects of each of the States in which they dwell as with their fellow citizens and brothers, since they recognize God as Creator of heaven and earth, because this is the letter and spirit of the Law of Moses.

V. Moral relationships. – The Great Sanhedrin prescribes to all Israelites, as duties essentially religious and inherent to their belief, the habitual and constant practice, towards all men recognizing God the Creator of heaven and earth, whatever religion they profess, of the acts of justice and charity whose fulfillment the Holy Books prescribe to them.

VI Civil and political relations. – Every Israelite born and raised in France and in the Kingdom of Italy, and treated by the laws of both States as a citizen, is religiously obliged to regard them as his homeland, to serve them, to defend them, to obey the laws and to conform, in all his transactions, to the provisions of the Civil Code. Any Israelite called up for military service is exempt by law, for the duration of this service, from all religious observances which cannot be reconciled with it.

VII Useful professions. – The Grand Sanhedrin orders all Israelites, and in particular those in France and Italy, who now enjoy civil and political rights, to seek and adopt the most appropriate means of inspiring youth with a love of work, and directing it towards a love of arts and crafts, as well as liberal professions, given that this praiseworthy exercise is in keeping with our holy religion, favorable to good morals, and essentially useful to the fatherland, which can only see dangerous citizens in idle and stateless men. He further invites them to acquire landed property, as a means of becoming more attached to their homeland, to renounce occupations that make men odious or contemptible in the eyes of their fellow citizens, and to do whatever we can to gain their esteem and goodwill.

VIII. Lending between Israelites – The Great Sanhedrin declares and orders, as a religious duty, that all Israelites demand no interest from their co-religionists, whenever it is a question of helping the father of a family in need, by means of an unofficial loan. It further stipulates that legitimate profit from loans between co-religionists is religiously permitted only in the case of commercial speculations that place the lender at risk, or in the case of lucre ceasing, according to the rate fixed by State law.

IX Lending between Israelites and non-Israelites. – The Great Sanhedrin declares to all Israelites, and particularly to those of France and Italy, that the provisions prescribed by the preceding decision on unofficial or interest-bearing loans from Hebrew to Hebrew, as well as the principles and precepts recalled by the text of Holy Scripture on this subject, extend to our compatriots, without distinction of religion, as well as to our co-religionists; it orders them all, as religious precepts, not to make any distinction in future in matters of loans between fellow citizens and co-religionists, all in accordance

with the preceding statute. Whoever transgresses this ordinance will be violating a religious duty and notoriously sinning against God's law. He further declares that all usury is indiscriminately forbidden, not only from Hebrew to Hebrew and from Hebrew to fellow citizen of another religion, but also with foreigners of all nations, considering this practice an abominable iniquity in the eyes of the Lord. Finally, he ordered all rabbis, in their preaching and instruction, to do their utmost to impress upon their fellow believers the maxims contained in the present decision.

These doctrinal decisions were an exact expression of the Emperor's views: they were modelled on the notes sent to M. de Champagny. All had done their duty: Champagny, by warning in secret; the commissioners, by demanding in public; the sanhedrites, by responding as they did.

VI

If Napoleon was loyal in the enterprise he had conceived of to melt the Israelites into society, even though he conducted it militarily, it is fair to acknowledge that, for their part, the Israelites contributed an equally loyal correspondence to the Emperor's design. This loyalty is apparent not only in their docility, but also in certain particularities associated with the sessions, some of which have remained famous.

When Count Molé, before reading out the famous imperial questionnaire, gave the stern opening speech which offended the Notables, because it cast doubt on their attachment to their new duties; and when, in the course of reading out the questionnaire, he came to the sixth question: Do Jews born in France and treated by law as citizens regard France as their homeland, and do they feel obliged to defend it? the Assembly, unable to contain its emotion, exclaimed with one voice: Yes, to the death.⁷⁴

Usury was also sincerely condemned. It cannot be denied that the Talmud admits usury against Christians, if it does not prescribe it. These sordid provisions are the fourfold consequence of the perversion of Israel's national character since the crime of Golgotha; of the unquenchable hatred and jealousy fostered against the Christians; of the reprisals that this often despoiled people took against its oppressors; and finally of the misfortunes inherent in its long dispersion. Whatever the causes and extenuating circumstances, these sordid dispositions are no less detestable or antisocial. The Jewish Assembly of 1807 had the merit and sincerity to recognize this. If it did not have the courage to agree that the words "usurer" and "Jew" had become synonymous by a kind of extraordinary chastisement, it relieved the ancient and beautiful Judaism of this reproach, and highly condemned usury: "It was time," exclaimed the president of the Notables, "that this habit, so often reproached to the Israelites as an effect of their religion, received by an essentially religious Israelite tribunal the ineffaceable scourge it deserves."⁷⁵

And here is that scourge:

"Doctors of the Law and Notables,

"None of you can doubt that, if we still lived under the civil and political institutions of our ancestors, if we formed a State, if we preserved the patriarchal mores of the time of Abraham or Moses, and there existed in Israel those men whom public opinion so justly scorns under the name of usurers, none of you, I say, doubt that they would not be ignominiously expelled from its bosom as violators of divine laws, and cease to belong to both religious and civil society.

"Well, what the magistrates and the laws of our ancestors would have done, it is up to you, ministers of religion, to do today, with the help of the religious and moral influence that your respectable ministry will give you.

"Thunder against this dishonorable and antisocial habit!"⁷⁶

And again:

"Let no one object to us that a vice, which the Law proscribes in Israel, can be tolerated towards foreigners. There is no double standard in the Law; it is one, and therefore obligatory towards foreigners. "It is therefore indispensable, it is our duty, to censure these destructive excesses of all public morality; it is essential to oppose a dam to this devastating torrent. Let those who have debased themselves to the point of ignoring and thus altering the purity of Israel's morality, return to themselves; let them be ashamed of their ignorance; let them hasten to abandon all these excesses; let them inspire their children with sentiments in conformity with divine and human laws; let them take up again, since they have the freedom to do so, the agriculture, the arts and the trades which illustrated our ancestors; then, only then, will they have fulfilled the Law, and made themselves agreeable both to the God of Israel and to mankind. "77

Where the loyal correspondence of the deputies to the Emperor's design is no less striking is in their complete adherence to military conscription. The Jews abhorred it; they shunned it, evaded it, as we said earlier (page 20–21). But to please Napoleon, there was no repugnance they were not prepared to overcome. The praise they lavished on him went beyond the goal, it was excessive; but the outpouring of their gratitude did not consist only in outrageous words, it was manifested by acts in which they lifted, as strong men, their nature that had become cowardly under the secular weight of humiliations; they accepted with zest the service of arms for all their co-religionists, into whose hands they brought the sword of the Machabees. On the Emperor's feast day, Rabbi Segré exclaimed: "Now that our fate is linked to that of the fatherland, our hearts, so to speak, have already been ennobled. Let us ardently embrace a felicity that was so long unknown to us; let us ask for weapons to defend this beloved homeland from all insults. "78

As a result of this vow, the Commission des Neuf included the following in its project for the organization of the Empire's synagogues:

L'ASSEMBLÉE DES ISRAÉLITES DE L'EMPIRE DE FRANCE ET DU ROYAUME D'ITALIE

Considering that it is the duty of all Israelites of the French Empire and the Kingdom of Italy, to shed their blood in battle for the cause of France, with the same devotion and valor as their ancestors once fought against the enemy nations of the Holy City, and to seek opportunities to make themselves worthy of the benefits that a great prince deigns at this time to bestow upon them;

Resolves:

That the Consistoires will complete the task of destroying, by their intervention and zeal, any estrangement Israelite youth may have for the noble profession of arms.⁷⁹

But the most resounding testimony to their sincerity was undoubtedly the spontaneous homage from their ranks to the Papacy and the Catholic clergy of all centuries. The Assembly of Notables came to a close, and the protection of Napoleon the Great filled all the representatives with excitement, amazement and gratitude. How different, they thought, from the humiliations of the past! Nevertheless, behind this protection of the great captain, their gaze caught sight of another protection which, peaceful and uninterrupted, had covered them through all the dark periods of their history: that of the Popes and the Catholic clergy. And then, like a cloud of incense, their recognition rose from the political to the religious sphere. It was a moving and magnificent tribute, somewhat analogous to Moses' canticle after the passage of the Red Sea. The Lawgiver of the Hebrews had thanked Almighty God, in the most beautiful transports of the holy language, for having snatched his people from the servitude of Egypt; the astonishing speech we are about to read, applauded by the whole Assembly of 1806, quivering and on its feet, came to thank the Papacy for having protected Israel during eighteen centuries of servitude in the midst of the nations. It was the deputy for Nice, M. Avigdor, who had the honor of delivering, on behalf of the Jews gathered and dispersed, these noble and touching words:

The most famous Christian moralists have defended persecution, professed tolerance and preached

fraternal charity.

Saint Athanasius (Liv. I) says:

"It is an execrable heresy to wish to draw out by force, by blows, by imprisonment, those whom it has not been possible to convince by reason."

"Nothing is more contrary to religion," says Justin Martyr (Liv. V), "than coercion."

"Shall we persecute," says Saint Augustine, "those whom God tolerates?"

Lactantius (liv. III) says on this subject:

"Forced religion is no longer religion; it must be persuaded, not coerced; religion cannot be commanded."

Saint Bernard says: "Advise, not force."

It is as a result of these sacred moral principles that, at different times, Roman Pontiffs have protected and welcomed into their States Jews persecuted and expelled from various parts of Europe; and that ecclesiastics of all countries have often defended them in several States in this part of the world.

Around the middle of the seventh century, Saint Gregory defended and protected Jews throughout the Christian world.

In the tenth century, the bishops of Spain were extremely energetic in opposing the people who wanted to massacre them.

Pontiff Alexander II wrote a letter of congratulations to the bishops for their wise conduct in this matter.

In the eleventh century, the Jews, who were numerous in the dioceses of Uzès and Clermont, were strongly protected by the bishops.

In the twelfth century, Saint Bernard defended them from the fury of the crusaders.

Innocent II and Alexander III also protected them.

In the thirteenth century, Gregory IX preserved them, in France as well as in England and Spain, from the great misfortunes with which they were threatened; he forbade, on pain of excommunication, coercion of their conscience and disturbance of their festivals.

Clement V did more than protect them; he also facilitated their education.

Clement VI granted them asylum in Avignon, at a time when they were being persecuted throughout the rest of Europe.

Around the middle of the same century, the Bishop of Speyer prevented the liberation that the Jews' debtors were forcibly demanding, under the false pretext of usury so often renewed.

In the following centuries, Nicholas II wrote to the Inquisition to prevent it from forcing Jews to embrace Christianity.

Clement XIII calmed the anxiety of fathers, alarmed at the fate of their children, who were often torn from their mothers' wombs.

It would be easy to cite an infinite number of other charitable deeds that the Israelites have been the object of at various times, on the part of ecclesiastics instructed in the duties of men and those of their religion.

The people of Israel, always unfortunate and almost always oppressed, have never had the means or the opportunity to express their gratitude for so many benefits; gratitude that is all the sweeter to bear witness to, as it owes it to disinterested and doubly respectable men.

For the past eighteen centuries, the circumstance in which we find ourselves is the only one that has presented itself to make known the sentiments with which our hearts are penetrated.

This great and happy 'circumstance, which we owe to our august and immortal Emperor, is also the most appropriate, the most beautiful and the most glorious, to express to philanthropists of all countries, and in particular to ecclesiastics, our full gratitude to them and to their predecessors.

Gentlemen, let us hasten to take advantage of this memorable moment, let us pay them the just tribute of gratitude that we owe them; let us make the expression of all our gratitude resound within these walls. Let us solemnly express our sincere thanks to them for the successive benefits they have bestowed on the generations that preceded us.

The minutes conclude as follows:

"The assembly applauded Mr. Avigdor's speech; it deliberated its insertion in full in the minutes, as well as its printing, and adopted the following decree:

"The deputies of the Empire of France and the Kingdom of Italy to the Hebrew Synod, decreed on May 30, penetrated with gratitude for the successive benefits of the Christian clergy, in past centuries, in favor of the Israelites of the various States of Europe ;

"Full of gratitude for the welcome which various Pontiffs and many other ecclesiastics have given at different times to the Israelites of various countries, at a time when barbarism, prejudice and ignorance together persecuted and expelled the Jews from the bosom of society ;

"Decide that the expression of these sentiments shall be recorded in the minutes of this day, so that it may remain forever as an authentic testimony of the gratitude of the Israelites of this assembly for the benefits which the generations that preceded them received from the ecclesiastics of the various countries of Europe;

"They further resolve that a copy of these sentiments shall be sent to His Excellency the Minister of Worship. "80

Never, O people of Israel, have you been better inspired since your long exile: all your Talmuds are not worth this outpouring of your gratitude and this monument to your sincerity.

VII

The Emperor saw the Jews only once during their sessions in Paris. A nine-member deputation (the Commission of Nine) was received in private audience, and made a good impression on the sovereign. The Israelite historian Graetz, who reports on this audience, exaggerates a little, we believe, the impression for and against: "The Emperor, who had imagined himself receiving bric-a-brac merchants, usurers, grovelling beings, bent double, cunning, greedy for gain, saw with astonishment, in these members of the Commission, men of solid and dignified character, with intelligence, an imposing bearing, and some of whom could have been included with advantage in his Council of State¹⁸¹". Satisfied with his meeting with the people, the Emperor was no less satisfied with the results of the sessions. How could he not have been? He had been praised, incensed, compared to the Messiah; the Law of Moses had been placed below the Napoleonic code; with the exception of the article on marriages, all his wishes, transmitted by M. de Champagny and the commissioners, had been fulfilled point for point; Israelite conscripts were to increase the strength of his battalions; in short, ancient Hebrew obstinacy had fallen at the flash of his sabre. The earth fell silent before Alexander 1 282, he had read in the Hebrew Bible; he who liked to compare himself to Alexander was satisfied with their silence and submission. Between the fumes of two battles, he found time to express his satisfaction. On March 9, 1807, the Great Sanhedrin had held its eighth and last session; Napoleon, back from the bloody battle of Eylau, was in Ostend; he wrote to M. de Champagny in these terms:

Ostend, March 30 1807.

Monsieur Champagny, I have received your letter of March 18th with the memorandum of my commissioners to the Grand Sanhedrin. They have fulfilled the goal I had in mind, despite the obstacles

they had to overcome; please express my satisfaction.
Napoleon83

The Emperor was satisfied. But did the French people have reason to be?
And did the Jewish people themselves share this satisfaction? Let's find out.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE IMPERIAL ENTERPRISE WILL BE IN VAIN, WHAT THE FUSION OF THE FUSION OF THE FRENCH AND ISRAELITES

- I. Obstacles to success on the Israelite side. Cold, hostile attitude of foreign synagogues: they reject the work accomplished by the Sanhedrin. On the other hand, the Sanhedrites, despite their loyal intentions, remain imbued with the Judaic spirit of separation and domination. Their skill in getting the imperial commissioners to recognize the authority of the Talmud: an enormous blunder on the part of the Emperor's government. -
- II. Obstacles arising from the goal: beyond Napoleon's power. The reconciliation of the Jews with other peoples is reserved for a man more extraordinary than himself. -
- III. Obstacles stemming from the great Emperor. Deism permeates his enterprise. He replaces Christ as the sole cornerstone of reconciliation. -
- IV. Obstacles arising from the very convening of the Sanhedrin: it was the Sanhedrin who had pronounced the death penalty against Jesus Christ. -
- V. General overview of the incorporation of Israelites into France, begun by the Constituante and consummated by Napoleon. Cold analysis of advantages and disadvantages. -
- VI. The tunic of Nessus.

The eye is saddened by the sight of ruins; it is perhaps more so by the encounter of an unfinished and aimless construction: human weakness and impotence are more fully betrayed in the work begun, left standing, and useless.

This is the painful feeling we feel when faced with the results of the Great Sanhedrin convened by Napoleon: a bold undertaking, unprecedented in the Christian centuries, whose aim was the improvement of the Israelites and their fusion with other peoples, and which remained more or less sterile. This goal had been recognized, accepted and acclaimed by the Sanhedrin. "Doctors of the Law and Notables, you have just completed the important mission entrusted to you by a Prince whose benefits are changing the destiny of the remnants of Israel. In the frequent conferences you have had, you have not had a thought, you have not experienced a feeling that did not have as its sole aim V civil and moral improvement of the children of Israel, and the ardent desire to second the magnanimous designs of His Majesty in their favor\" A century later, history's answer will be: sterility.

If an arm and a genius could have made the undertaking a success, were they not, however, Napoleon's genius and arm? The Emperor had left no stone unturned for success: to the national representation of the Hebrews, expressed by the Assembly of Notables, had been added religious consecration, expressed by the Sanhedrin. But there are works that surpass human effort, and this was one of them.

Let's try to demonstrate the vulnerable aspects of this bold undertaking from the outset.

Right from the start, the Israelites themselves - not those within Napoleon's arm's reach, of course, but all the others - had no faith whatsoever in what had been pompously worked out and decided in Paris.

In an indignant letter to the Sanhedrin, an English Jew was quick to criticize the assembly's conduct:

"What votes have you obtained from Jewish communities outside France? Have our brothers in

Constantinople, Aleppo, Cochin, Baghdad and all the regions not subject to French domination sent you deputies? Have they approved your decisions? In England, they also reject your religious and political doctrine "84 And later, in 1844, a famous rabbi ironically summed up universal Jewish opinion: "Besides the fact that the decisions of the Sanhedrin are little known to the common Jews, they have never taken them seriously, knowing full well that they were dictated under the pressure of fear inspired by the angry iron will of the saber of Marengo.

copies of these doctrinal decisions have become extremely rare. The Jews do not care for the publicity of this bad joke⁸⁵."

"Bad joke" was how Napoleon's enterprise was judged in the Synagogue.

The military shamelessness with which the Emperor had treated the Law of Moses, placing it below the Napoleonic code; the answers to his famous questionnaire, dictated, word for word, to the members of the Jewish Council as if they were children: all this, known abroad, had greatly displeased the old gray beards of Baghdad, Gochin, Aleppo and Constantinople. The English Jew's letter is the proof!

A highly erudite canon we met one day asked us wittingly: "At the Paris Sanhedrin, didn't the rabbis have their organic articles, just as we Catholic clergy had ours at the Concordat?" The comparison is apt. It's not surprising, then, that the rabbinate, after the demise of the terrible preceptor, called his work by the Sanhedrin a bad joke.

But did the members of the Sanhedrin themselves, while convinced that they were loyally in line with the Emperor's designs, harbor an inner conviction that Israel would merge and reconcile with other peoples?

We don't think so, indeed we believe the opposite.

Indeed, alongside their sincere intention to love and serve their new homeland, and to behave as brothers with the French, there remained in their hearts the hereditary persuasion that Israel is a race apart, a chosen people destined sooner or later to dominate the world. This spirit of separatism and domination is the very basis of misguided Judaism. Christ had wanted to join Judaism to the magnificent river that flowed from the Gospel and changed the face of the world; but Judaism, in spite of all this, confined itself to a closed lake of unhealthy exhalations. Now, notwithstanding the loyal declarations of the Sanhedrin of 1807, this spirit of separatism and domination will inevitably call everything into question between people of the Synagogue and other peoples. The Sanhedrites may well promise that they and their descendants will be good brothers to the French, but this promise, sincere on their lips and in their hearts, is contradicted and annulled by their false Judaism, which has become pestilential. There is, we hasten to add, a true Judaism which, with the apostles, all of Jewish origin, merged into Christianity; But, to the misfortune of Israel and mankind, there is also a false Judaism which has never ceased to be inconvenient, because it perpetuates the detestable leaven of the Pharisees; and, through it, the best Israelites remain predisposed to hatred of the Christian name and, consequently, of Christian homelands. Alas, this false Judaism makes them false in spite of themselves, even though they possess fine moral qualities. How unfortunate! How sad it is to see loyal intentions above a Judaic slope that ends up dragging loyalty down! And how dreadful such dualism is for society! The great Israelite bankers will be absorbing all private fortunes in their colossal agiotage, their influence in the press will be becoming the pitfall of all Christian and patriotic institutions, which they will still believe fulfill the promises of brotherhood sworn in Napoleon's hands, because they pay taxes and perform military service. It is generally agreed that there is no more hopeless obstacle than a false judgment, complicated by stubbornness. Well, rogue Judaism is nothing less than a false judgment on Christ and Christian society, with the granite of nineteen centuries of hardening. Yet it was this false judgment, fortified with hardening, that Napoleon, completing the uncautious enterprise of the 89 legislators, introduced further, in 1807, into French society. As the improvement of the Israelites was only on the surface,

fusion and reconciliation with other peoples could also only exist on the surface.

The Emperor himself, so the story goes, soon realized the sterility of his work. A few months later, when he was in Poland and saw the eagerness of the Jews to make themselves useful to the French army, and to serve, for pay, as suppliers or informers, he said with a laugh: That's what the Grand Sanhedrin is for!⁸⁶ A playful reflection that betrayed the powerlessness of other results.

Something more serious happened at the Sanhedrin. The point was never made.

To force the Jews to give up the habits he had brought with him from Palestine, Napoleon had thought it clever to split the Law of Moses (see above, page 69). His keen eye had discerned in the Bible an unchanging part, the doctrine and worship, and a part open to discussion, the Palestinian and political customs. "Let the one be retained," he had meant, "let the other be abandoned!" It was this distinction that had so irritated foreign synagogues, for in Jewish law there is an intimate connection between what is political and what is religious.

A hole had therefore been cut in the Bible.

Napoleon was mistaken.

It was the Talmud that had to be targeted, perforated, razed, interdicted, destroyed: the Talmud, a book of lead on the intelligence and heart of Israel, a heavy mass with viperous slits against the nations, the devil's arsenal!

11 The Talmud was to be machine-gunned; the Bible was to be left alone!

In a clever twist, the Jews of the Sanhedrin enveloped Molé, the imperial commissioner, in flattery and adulation, and persuaded him to rely on the Talmud itself, as an irresistible authority, to impose more on Israelites the world over, and to win their sympathies more surely. And Molé fell for it. With his youthful ardor, he had begun thus in the midst of these devious old men:

"His Majesty, in exchange for the august protection He grants you, demands a religious guarantee of the full observance of the principles set forth in your replies. It is necessary that these answers... be placed next to the Talmud, and thus acquire, in the eyes of all Jews of all countries and all centuries, the greatest possible authority." ⁸⁷

Next to the Talmud! never have the blunders and blunders of a government been more enormous, and never have the Jews practiced more skilful finesse. Napoleon wanted to make them give up their old anti-social habits, and they had his government officially recognize and consecrate the Talmud, the fuel of their hatred and cunning! Also, see how their answers to the imperial questionnaire are flanked by two redoubts, the Law of Moses and the Talmud.

Examples:

Third question

Can a Jewess marry a Christian, and a Christian marry a Jew?

Answer

The prohibition applies only to idolatrous peoples; and the Talmud formally declares that modern nations are not, since, like us, they worship the God of heaven and earth.

Fourth question

In Jewish eyes, are the French their brothers, or are they foreigners?

Answer

In Jewish eyes, the French are their brothers, not foreigners. The spirit of the laws of Moses is consistent with this view of the French.

And this doctrine is professed by the Talmud.

Fifth question

What relations does their law prescribe with French people who are not of their religion?

Answer

The Talmud and custom prescribe the same relations with French people who are not of our religion, as those between a Jew and another Jew.⁸⁸

And so, with the approval and even connivance of the government, the Talmud is solemnly recognized as a religious Code. We repeat, we insist, it was impossible to commit a more serious error, morally and historically. Morally: it was announced before the whole of Paris, before the whole of Europe, that the Jews were going to be reformed, and they were allowed to start this reform of the Talmud, which had always perverted them: a worrying vicious circle, which was obvious to all and which, no doubt, the new dogma of freedom of conscience prevented from being seen or broken. If the Emperor had had the prudence to involve a few Catholic theologians in his commissioners, either publicly or secretly, they would not have failed to sound the alarm against this surreptitious yet official entry of the Talmud. This is one case, among a hundred others, where the absence of the clergy will forever be regrettable. If ecclesiastical authority had held sway, as it did in the times of Charlemagne and Saint Louis, in such a serious matter, the Israelites of the Sanhedrin would not have dared to draw conclusions based on the Talmud. They would have been stopped dead in their tracks. "The Law of Moses, as the basis of your reformation," very good! "The Talmud" never! Napoleon, for wanting to judge such an arduous question as a competent master, let the enemy into the square. From a moral point of view, this was a serious mistake.

Historically, the fault was no less enormous. History tells us that the Pontiffs and the most Christian kings had not ceased to take energetic measures against this book, which was considered a dangerous and concealed enemy. In Paris, which attended the Grand Sanhedrin without understanding anything about it, twenty cartloads of Talmuds and Jewish books had, one day, crossed the streets to be burned in the Place de Grève. That was in the year 1239. And in 1807, this cursed book was deployed by the Sanhedrin like a phoenix rising from its ashes; and Paris, which no longer knows its own history, let it happen! Popes Gregory IX, Innocent IV, Julius III and Paul IV wrote in their own handwriting to the sovereigns of France, England, Aragon, Castile, Leon, Portugal and Austria, recommending that this book, which darkness has shaped, be driven back into darkness; kings and emperors hunted it down; and you, Caesar of the Revolution, at odds with the prudence of the centuries, approve of it being put on the candlestick!

The last straw will be that the national printing house will be responsible for reprinting the Talmud, partly at public expense. This will happen in 1876.⁸⁹

II

Through the old Pharisaic leaven that remains within them, and also through the detestable book that continues to govern them, the Israelites, despite their praiseworthy efforts, are therefore rebellious to the goal Napoleon set himself. But wasn't this goal itself beyond the power of the mighty Emperor?

To bring the Jews, willingly or by force, into the concert of national unity, and thereby into the family of peoples with whom they would no longer live as enemies, but be reconciled: such was Napoleon's objective.

The first part of this program, entry into the concert of national unity, was feasible up to a point, despite its dangers for the hospitable nation. All that was needed was for the new citizens to pay the common tax, be called up for military service, and have free access to all careers and functions of the State. As for the second part of the program, reconciliation with the peoples, that was something else! A hundred years have almost passed since the Emperor's order to enter, and the returnees from Pâlestine, who have entered the great family of peoples, circulate like ghosts or impose themselves as masters, but have

hardly merged, and in no way reconciled. Apart from a few fleeting friendships or those of position, mistrust hangs over civil and commercial relations. Between native and acquired citizens, an abyss remains that nothing has been able to bridge.

Failure was to be expected.

An Abbé Emery who had been called to the Emperor's Council, or some other theologian versed in the Scriptures, would have spoken to the Sovereign as follows: "Sire, Your Majesty will not succeed. And why not?" asked Caesar abruptly.

"Sire, Your Majesty is extraordinary: his works dazzle and overwhelm. But this work of reconciliation is reserved for a man even more extraordinary than Napoleon: the prophet Elijah.

"It is of him that it is written in the book of infallible oracles:

"Elijah will restore all things⁹⁰... He will reunite the hearts of fathers with their children, and the hearts of children with their fathers.⁹¹

"Sire, your sword is lightning, and your horsemen make fire fly. But this prophet, too, was taken away by horses of fire, and he must return to put an end to the hardening of this Jewish people in whom Your Majesty is interested, and to reconcile them with other peoples.

"Sire, Your Majesty can prepare the way for this great work, but in a different way.

Indeed, what was Napoleon's main basis for the fusion he dreamed of between the Israelites and the peoples of his empire? He based it, after the relationships that equality before the law would create between them, on flesh and blood, by means of mixed marriages. The potentate regarded marriage as the principal and most effective means of fusion. He made a point of mixing new men with the old races; his court offered the strangest mix of hymen. A daughter of the King of Bavaria had just married the Viceroy of Italy, Eugène, his adopted son, and he himself was thinking of aging his origins in a hymen with an Archduchess. He convinced himself that he would similarly mix Jews with Christians through marriage. But he was wrong! The Sanhedrin resisted: the Jewish people do not mix⁹²! When the clock of the centuries strikes the late hour of reconciliation, fusion will take place, not by means of flesh and blood, as Napoleon wanted, but in the vision of truth and in virtue of the word of the holy prophet.

This is why, O Caesar, you will not achieve your goal. The prophet more extraordinary than you is designated, in Catholic Tradition, by an uplifting name, in keeping with this goal: the golden clasp of Israel and the Nations. Towards the evening of the centuries, in a magnificent twilight, he will reconcile hearts, uniting, like a knot of love, Israel and the Nations on the bosom of the Church!

Staple on your battle cloak, O Caesar, thrust your spurs into the flanks of your steed, and depart: the reconciliation of the Jews with mankind is not your concern.

III

One objection, however.

Couldn't Napoleon prepare for this reconciliation, the success of which God has reserved for himself, in civil life, just as Charlemagne prepared the way for the peoples of the North to enter civilization?

Certainly, Napoleon would have been the pioneer, had he brought Charlemagne's views of faith to his enterprise. But to the obstacles already identified, which stemmed either from the Israelites or from the goal itself, the great Emperor added others, brought about by his imperial person.

Continuing in the footsteps of the Constituent Assembly, which had repudiated Christ from the foundations of modern society, Napoleon substituted himself – unconsciously, no doubt – for the One who alone, here on earth, exercises the role of cornerstone. It is in this sense that we must interpret the following astonishing words of flattery, uttered in the Sanhedrin: "This philanthropic conception is

worthy of this great man, who can belong exclusively to no class, to no religion, to no people; of this sublime genius who is for the human race a gift of Providence, and whose beneficent influence must be felt by all men.⁹³ To the Christ of God, alone, was given, by Heaven, the mission to exert the universal influence recalled by the flattery of the Sanhedrin, and to be the beneficent cornerstone that would join the most distant, the most opposed extremes. In superb proclamations to his armies, the Emperor undoubtedly pointed to the extremes to be reached: Soldiers, after triumphing on the Danube and the Vistula, you have marched through Germany and then France without a moment's rest. Soldiers, I need you. Let us carry our triumphant eagles to the Columns of Hercules... The conqueror who soared from one end of Europe to the other, from the Niemen to the Columns of Hercules, flattered himself that in religion he would likewise go from Catholicism to Judaism, from the Concordat to the Sanhedrin, and reconcile the extremes. But Christ reserved this religious conciliation for himself. He ceded all other glories to men, except this one, reserved for him and his Church; a famous formula is the golden circle: One flock and one shepherd. Napoleon, to succeed in his work of Judeo-Christian conciliation, had called upon all forms of support: the Assembly of Notables, the Sanhedrin, the Civil Code, the Council of State; all forms of support, except that without which the others are useless and which dispenses with all the others: the single fold under the single shepherd. But then again, Napoleon's empire hardly prepared the way for the divine sheepfold, and the Corsican with his Roman profile didn't exactly have the physiognomy of a shepherd-king!

Does this mean that Napoleon wanted to exclude the Divinity from his Hebrew enterprise? Certainly not, since he was invoking the Law of Moses. However, as we have already said (page 29), the Emperor was a deist, and he was so deluded as to believe that with deism, a vague form of religiosity, he would bring together in civil life, if not religions, at least men of different faiths. He opened up about this himself with de Las Cases, one evening on St. Helena: "Everything proclaims the existence of a God. It's indubitable! But all our religions are obviously the children of men... There is no doubt that my spirit of incredulity was, as emperor, a blessing for the people; and otherwise, how could I have equally favored such contrary sects, if I had been dominated by only one?"¹⁹⁴ Also, at the beginning of his astonishing fortune, as he set foot on Egyptian soil, he made deism both his rule of conduct and that of his army: "Soldiers, the peoples with whom we are going to live are Mohammedans, and their first article of faith is this: There is no other God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet. Don't contradict them; deal with them as we have dealt with the Jews and the Italians. Have respect for their muphtis and imans, as you have had for rabbis and bishops. Show the same tolerance for the ceremonies prescribed by the Koran, for mosques, as you have shown for convents, for synagogues, for the religion of Moses and that of Jesus Christ. The Roman legions protected all religions⁹⁵. The Sanhedrin of Paris was thus, no less than other religious enterprises, the expression of imperial deism, with the aim of bringing Israelites closer to Christians. But His Majesty was mistaken: deism has never brought anything closer. Apart from the fact that the God of this vague form of religion is an icy God who does not know the ways of the heart, an abstract and solitary being who dwells in the inaccessible region of the infinite, and before whom man passes without the idea of a prayer or the power of a tear ; in addition to this emptiness, this ice, deism, a vague and lazy religiosity, without revelation or worship, was here absolutely unfit to bring together believers like the Christians and the Israelites, some of whom possess total Revelation, and the others, a notable part of Revelation. The Christian is a complete believer; the Israelite, an incomplete believer, a man behind the times. Whoever wishes to bring them closer together must not bring them the absence of Revelation, but agreement on Revelation. The crowned deist of the Tuileries could not, therefore, notwithstanding his philanthropic views and the wingspan of his eagles, become the arbiter of pacification.

IV

Far from it! Deism misguided him in convening the Sanhedrin.

At first glance, it seems that there was grandeur, or at least originality, in the reappearance of an assembly that had not been held since Titus had ruined the Jerusalem of David and Solomon. That Israelite historians subsequently applauded this reappearance⁹⁶ is hardly surprising. But the decree of convocation itself, issued by the sovereign, revealed a proud satisfaction in striking this great blow. M. Molé, the government commissioner, expressed himself in these terms, which we have already reported: It is the Grand Sanhedrin that His Majesty proposes to convene. This body, which fell with the Temple, will reappear to enlighten the people it governed⁹⁷.

With all due respect, Mr. Government Commissioner, the Emperor has issued a challenge and an affront to Christian France and Europe, when he thus resurrects in the middle of Paris an assembly whose precedents were horrifying.

What precedents?

It was with this supreme council of the Jewish nation that the Savior had to contend during his ministry in Judea and Jerusalem; it was among its members that he encountered implacable adversaries, the hypocritical and dissolute Pharisees, who pursued him relentlessly and finally succeeded in delivering him to the rack;

It was the Sanhedrin who accepted Judas' infamous bargain and counted him the thirty pieces of silver so that the Righteous One could be delivered to them;

It was before the Sanhedrin that this awful and painful trial took place, in which we found and counted twenty-seven Irregularities⁹⁸;

It was inside the Sanhedrin that the Passion began; that from its rotten bosom came the hateful exclamation: "Why do we need witnesses? he is worthy of death; and that immediately the scene of nameless outrages took place, where the Son of God was blown, spat upon and insulted. These magistrates, giving the signal for indignities, first spat in Jesus' face, then blindfolded him and punched him, saying after each blow: "Christ, prophesy! who will strike 1 99? When their fury had subsided, the Sanhedrites handed Jesus over to their servants. The valet took charge of the outrages for the rest of the night, and the Sanhedrin withdrew;

Finally, it was the Sanhedrin who reappeared on Golgotha, to mock and laugh at the Man of Sorrows, and incite the crowd to an overflow of insults.¹⁰⁰

This execrable and accursed Assembly had never recovered from the blow of justice dealt it by Titus, and it was the Emperor of the French who resurrected it in Paris¹⁰¹!

It was said of Napoleon, in reference to his coronation at Notre-Dame:

"One day, the doors of this basilica opened, and a soldier appeared on the threshold, surrounded by generals and followed by twenty victories. Where does he go? He enters, slowly crosses the nave, climbs up in front of the sanctuary; there he is in front of the altar. What has he come to do, the child of a generation that laughed at Christ? He has come to prostrate himself before the Vicar of Christ, and ask him to bless his hands so that the sceptre is not too heavy next to the sword; he has come to bow his military head before the old man of the Vatican, and confess to all that glory would not be enough, without religion, to crown an emperor." ¹⁰²

Yes, it was a glorious day at Notre-Dame; but a few steps away from the noble basilica, I caught sight of the Sanhedrin, and heard these inconceivable words coming out of the mouth of his representative, in the name of the Emperor:

This body, which fell with the Temple, has just reappeared to enlighten the whole world about the people it governed!

So you didn't know what the Sanhedrin had committed against Jesus Christ! And no one in your entourage or your clergy warned Your Majesty that the words of his commissioner smacked of Julian the Apostate! Julian tried to raise the Temple: Your Majesty raises the Sanhedrin, which fell with the Temple. Ignorance excuses Your Majesty: but here, in the wake of the Rights of Man, is the second foundation of Jewish preponderance, more colossal and formidable than a stone temple!

Julian the Apostate, evoked and celebrated in Masonic conciliabula, must have been cackling in the shadows.

V

So, what was to come out of this strange assembly? Our detailed enumeration of the various obstacles allows us to pass judgment.

This judgment is important, for it is to the Sanhedrin of 1807 that the Israelites of France trace their real entry into society. One of their most learned jurisconsults, M. Bédarride, President of the Bar Association of Montpellier during the reign of Napoleon III, speaks of it thus:

This is the immense work accomplished by Emperor Napoleon. Strictly speaking, it was the convening of the Sanhedrin that brought about the complete regeneration of the Jews, their empowerment to exercise the rights of citizenship.

The Revolution of 1789 had legally given the Jews the rights of citizenship, and the Sanhedrin's responses proved that they were worthy of this title.

Napoleon's name must be inscribed at the head of the new era that has opened for the Jews.¹⁰³

In 1807, therefore, it was the Sanhedrin, following on from the Constituent Assembly of 1791, which introduced the Hebrews into French society.

The Emperor's aim in convening the assembly was fusion: to merge the Israelites with the French, and then with other peoples.

Four kinds of fusion were possible:

That of hearts ;

Of minds;

Of material interests;

of vices.

Of these four mixtures, how many would succeed, and be worth something? And for whom the advantages, for whom the disadvantages? The answer must be impartial.

Will the fusion of hearts be achieved? Obviously not, since the examination of truth in religion or of true religion was not part of the Sanhedrin's program. The wall of separation will remain, as in the past, between French Christians and French Israelites. The same mutual distrust, the same racial antipathies, will be found again after a hundred years of living together under the Napoleonic Code, because it is only understanding in religion that brings about the fusion of hearts.

Will the fusion of minds, at least, succeed? Happily enough, but all to the advantage of the Israelites. Indeed, in the blending of ideas, the French spirit will gain absolutely nothing from the Israelite spirit, given that, since their penal dispersion, the Jews have produced nothing of value for the intellectual, moral and artistic development of humanity. The thunderbolt that left no stone unturned in the

construction of the Temple simultaneously shattered the intelligence of the people of the Bible. This intelligence resembles that of a man who has had a stroke. Ideas no longer follow one another, or are petty and childish. The ten folio volumes of the Jerusalem Talmud contain not a single new, important idea, but a host of nonsense. Physicians, skilled practitioners, is all that is accepted of them, and still with caution, in the great current of letters, sciences and arts in the Middle Ages¹⁰⁴. Consequently, in terms of the fusion of minds, the French had, alas, no intellectual revival to look forward to in the entire Hebraic field that opened up to them in 1807.

On the contrary, the Israelites will benefit from the mix. As new French citizens, they will be able to attend schools, sit in academies and assimilate the treasure trove of knowledge acquired by Christian peoples. Their intelligence, revived and stimulated by the gift of freedom, will rediscover energies it has not known since the punishment of deicide. The Christian ideas which, revolutionary debaucheries notwithstanding, form the ambient air of the nations, will penetrate the sons of Israel without their knowledge, and more than one, visited by a discreet ray of God's grace, will make his way from a state school to the sanctuary of the Church. This is how it happened for the fortunate writer of this book and for his brother: by studying Bossuet's *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* in a lycée, they were led to study the Gospel in a seminary.

Will the merger of interests at least be more advantageous to the French than the previous one?

One would hope that, here, compensation could be obtained. Indeed, won't the business genius that Israelites pride themselves on possessing become a precious boost for the French and a source of prosperity for France?

French fortune will have nothing to gain by merging with Hebraic fortune.

Firstly, from the point of view of the conception of commercial and industrial enterprises, a disappointment is in store.

In all her ventures, France used to bring grandeur, a luxury, almost, of magnanimous sentiments. It was big in business as in politics, in the marketplace as on the battlefield. From now on, everything will become smaller, with the Judaic spirit admitted to the Council of the Nation. The business genius attributed to Israel is nothing but the genius of small affairs, of small tricks; this genius is to true genius what cunning is to straightforward skill, what the foxes of the Song were to the lion of Judah: this one, majestic, aroused to greatness, those demolished.¹⁰⁵ The Crusades, which were one of France's most useful and splendid commercial ventures, will be replaced, for the French, by the shenanigans and disasters of agiotage.

If, from the conception of commercial enterprises, we pass to the examination of their honesty, what peril awaits poor France! The Talmud is still there, not only tolerated, but surrounded by respect from the Emperor's government. The Talmud is the escape route for honesty, just as the Gospel is its seal. If, in the Middle Ages, the private fortunes of Christians were anxious in the concealed vicinity of the Talmud, what fears are there not to conceive not only for private fortunes, but for public fortunes, at the spectacle of Jews henceforth involved in the management of State affairs, and free to consult the morality of their Talmud. Here it is, denounced by a sincere rabbi who has joined the ranks of Catholicism:

The three least civilized, most ignorant Jews who are made to sit as judges, immediately form a tribunal which in the eyes of the synagogue has full authority, we groan to have to say, to release their co-religionists from their oaths, to annul their most sacred promises and commitments, both for the past and for the future!

The Jew, feeling his conscience too burdened by promises and oaths, had three of his brothers sit down and form a court. Before this court, he repents all the promises and oaths he has ever made, and retracts them. They are so numerous," he says, concluding his protest, "that I cannot specify them. Let them

therefore be in your eyes, I pray you, O Rabbis, as if I had enumerated them in detail." The court, without further ado, declares the aforementioned oaths and promises null and void.

Before the cantor intones the first prayer of the Feast of Atonement in the synagogue, three men, assembled as a tribunal and placed at the head of the audience, annul with their full authority all the vows, pledges and oaths of everyone in the assembly, both those of the year just past and those of the year just entered. We call this *Col nidrè*.

We don't need to explain the disastrous effect of these two ceremonies, so opposed to all the principles of the simplest morality. 106

All this is enshrined in the Talmud, recognized as the doctrinal book of the Jews by Napoleon's government. From this official recognition, are there not fears to be conceived and concluded for the honesty of French companies in the future, since Jews will henceforth participate in them?

Business design; business honesty; and then, business results:

Well, in terms of results, what can we expect from the fusion of interests between the French and the Israelites?

Alas, none other than the engulfment of French interests in Israelite interests, which will be tantamount to their suppression: the renewed story of the seven lean cows devouring the seven fat cows¹⁰⁷ !

Indeed, it's all very well to say that there are honest Israelites, magnanimous Israelites and charitable Israelites: we don't deny it, and we'd be showing ourselves to be an unworthy son by refusing to recognize and proclaim it. There are many of them, no doubt about it. But it is also indisputable that the Jewish people as a whole, as a people, is a grabber of the earth's goods, and that, remaining irreducible in the fusion of other peoples, it will insensibly pump their wealth: a vast sponge whose swelling will be favored by the protection of liberal laws.

We apologize for this rigorous but necessary analysis of the merger.

Let's not forget the vices.

We'd like to be able to write: fusion of the virtues too.

But virtues only germinate in the wake and shadow of religious doctrines, and since the doctrines between Israelites and French remain opposed, there will only be a chance encounter of virtues.

Alas! of all mergers, that of vices will be the most real, accepted and fruitful on both sides.

The French will communicate to the Israelites the spirit of incredulity and indifference in matters of religion, born in the XVth century, and the depravity of morals, which has become popular since the disorders imitated by Louis XIV and Louis XV and the saturnalia of the Revolution. The ancient Israelite faith, which in the space of eighteen centuries had only had to deplore the boldness of Spinoza, would begin to falter under the breath of rationalism; and patriarchal families, whose virtues had been preserved in the midst of penal dispersion, would go through disturbances they had never known. The emancipation of the Israelites took place in a detestable environment: that of rationalism and Voltairianism. This is a heavy responsibility for France and the nations of Europe.

For their part, the Israelites will pass on to the French their unbridled thirst for gold, and with it the cohort of all failings and shameful pleasures. Excited by greed and lucre, the sons of noble France, who know how to do nothing by halves, will envy the Hebrews their gold, their expedients, their basenesses; they will imitate them; and the French spirit, tinged with false Judaism, will be unrecognizable.

In this state of affairs, Jewish preponderance will easily find a home.

VI

One of the most dramatic episodes in the Fable is undoubtedly that of Hercules donning the unique

Nessus sent by Dejanira.¹⁰⁸

Sophocles tells it like this, with Hyllos, son of Hercules and Dejanira, speaking:

I myself f saw the cruel sufferings of my father. He had stopped in Euboea, on Cape Genoa, battered on both sides by the waves. He was about to offer a sacrifice to Jupiter, when the herald Lichas arrived, bringing your present, the mortal tunic. Hercules put it on as you wished; he sacrificed twelve superb bulls, the first fruits of his spoils. But no sooner does the sacrificial flame rise from the pyre to consume the victims, than sweat pours from his body; the tunic clings to his sides and sticks to his flesh; a burning pain penetrates to the marrow of his bones, then a deadly venom like that of the fatal hydra devours his limbs. Then he calls the unfortunate Lichas, who was innocent of your crime, and asks him by what treachery he brought him this tunic; Vinfortuné, who knew nothing, replies that the present came from you alone, who Pavais was responsible for bringing it. At this moment, a violent convulsion rips through Hercules' entrails, he grabs Lichas by the heel, and throws him against a rock battered by the waves; from his half-open head, the brains spurt out onto his hair along with the blood. All the people let out a lamentable cry at the sight of Lichas crushed and Hercules in delirium, and no one dared approach Vapprocher; he would roll to the ground, then rise again, uttering high-pitched cries that echoed off the surrounding rocks, the craggy mountains of the Locrians and the promontories of Euboea. At last, exhausted, the unfortunate man, sometimes falling back to the ground, sometimes uttering dreadful cries, cursed the disastrous hymen that punishes you, unhappy woman, and then, raising his haggard, troubled eyes, he spotted me in the crowd where I was bursting into tears, and called out to me: "You know Mount Oeta, consecrated to Jupiter; well, that's where your hands should carry my body "¹⁰⁹.

The prince of Christian eloquence, Father Lacor- daire, applied this Fable to the moral order. In Notre-Dame de Paris, he had this to say about the tyranny of the passions:

"Oh! which of you, Messieurs, not only in the ardor of youth, but under the ice of age, has not painfully felt this incredible state of our personality? Which of you, if not completely abandoned to the abjection of the senses, has not wept mysterious tears over himself, and raised uncertain and supplicating thoughts to heaven! No strength of mind, no elevation of fortune defends us against the attacks of this evil that might be called the soul's deadly disease. The ancients knew this, and they told it to us in a Fable that has remained famous among all those that come from their genius. Hercules, the heroic man, had vanquished monsters and pacified empires; at the height of his glory, in the maturity of an age which now heralded only the repose of imperishable greatness, he received from the hands of a woman a precious tunic which he hastened to put on. The unfortunate man! No sooner had the fragile fabric been laid on his flesh, than he felt consumed by a devouring fire; he put his hands on it, he wanted to tear it from his generous limbs: in vain, the poisoned thread was stronger than this hand that had brought down tyrants. Hercules, Hercules! don't be astonished; man can defeat monsters, but he cannot tear Dejanira's tunic from his flesh h¹¹⁰..."

It has been said that, in the social order, this Fable also found its application: that the incorporation of the Jewish race into modern society was a poisoned tunic. What's the truth of this? and above all, what can we do about it?

Without having first been regenerated by the Church of God, and without having renounced the Talmud and its perfidies, the Jewish race was merged into the French nation; the members of the Constituent Assembly in 1791, then Napoleon, at the Grand Sanhedrin of 1807, produced this masterpiece; yes, this is indeed the tunic of Nessus, presented in the name of the Revolution, the new Dejanira!

France thus incorporated the Jews, carelessly and confidently...

The result was not long in coming.

Behold, an unknown, strange fire circulated in its veins; this fire, the ardors of the thirst for gold, the animosity against the Christian religion, against God's ministers, against pure virgins; this fire, the hatred of Christ! Ancient glories have been torn to pieces; public wealth has disappeared; the population has become anxious, famished: it's the agony of the Euboean promontory...

To be fair, however, we must recognize that the poison did not come from the Jews alone. Quite the contrary! The cunning and cruel Déjanire of the Revolution knew exactly what she was doing when she added Talmudic passions and hatreds to the more guilty and hateful passions of Rousseau, Voltaire and the Masonic Lodges.

When poor France realized the mistake, it wanted to reverse its fatal incorporation. But how to get rid of the Jews? Inexorable logic says: It's impossible.

Impossible, since the Constituent Assembly had voted for equality: equality before the law; equality of all citizens, without distinction of worship;

Impossible, because under the regime of Gode Napoléon, French interests have become enveloped in Hebrew interests; they have become entwined in inextricable bonds; the tunic of Shem has stuck to the fortunes and destinies of France: it can only be torn off by tearing off the flesh! Won't it be a hundred years since the compenetration took place? The French and Israelites have grown old together, mixing their vices and sharing their pleasures.

But isn't there a remedy?

Yes, indeed, there is a remedy:

On the tunic sent by Dejanira there was only the blood of a centaur;

On the Jewish race, there is the blood of a God: May his blood fall on us and on our children!

When, on both sides, this blood is invoked as a merciful and divine remedy, all may be pacified and healed.

BOOK TWO

THE DISORGANIZED NATIONS OF EUROPE AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE ORGANIZED BY THE SAME MAN

CHAPTER ONE

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE NATIONS

I. How the Christian religion has proposed felicity in the form of a kingdom of God, not only for the next life, but already in this life. The Catholic Church is the visible expression of this kingdom. -

II. Superb embedding of nations in the kingdom of God; the place of each; holy empire and Christian republic. -

III. A picture of their felicity: the blossoming of the reign of justice in their midst. -

IV. Contrast with the miserable condition of the Jews. -

V. Response to an objection from the Jews, drawn from the remnants of barbarism that overshadowed the nations, despite their enshrinement in the kingdom of God.

I

Christianity, which has had the merit of originality in every respect, is the only one of the various religions to have represented and proposed felicity to mankind in the form of a kingdom of God.

Here, in fact, is the great word of the Gospel that has forever established an alliance, a kind of equation, between this kingdom and felicity:

'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness', and all the rest will be given you in addition.¹¹¹

The region of happiness that all men have sought, after which generations have longed, is now at last designated and determined: and this region is a kingdom of God and Injustice. There is only one God who, knowing our nature because he made it, could present felicity to us in a form as precise and as happy as that of a kingdom under his control.

Indeed, what idea do we have of happiness? By what signs do we judge that there is happiness somewhere?

We usually say there is happiness when the following three conditions are met:

First, when there is possession, abundance, fullness, satiation;

Secondly, when there is peace, order, harmony and tranquillity in this possession and abundance;

Thirdly, when in this possession and in this peace, there is duration. In fact, happiness appears to us as a stable state. Happiness without duration is not true happiness. To be happy, we need to convince ourselves that our happiness will never end. So, no matter how hard you try to demoralize people, they will always be warned not to confuse pleasure with happiness. We think of pleasure as a transitory situation, as a fleeting act that does not last, whereas we think of happiness as a state that lasts. Yes, pleasure will never be more than a transitory situation; happiness, on the other hand, is a state. No matter how much we lavish people with pleasures and more pleasures, the absence of duration will always make them understand that elsewhere is the secret of being happy.

Thus: Abundance, possession, plenitude;

Peace, tranquility of order;

Duration;

These are the three elements that contribute to the formation of happiness.

This being the case, could Christianity propose felicity to mankind in a more precise, more just form than that of a kingdom of God?

Indeed,

a) As we have said, felicity consists first and foremost in possession, abundance and fullness;

Now, what more exact expression of this abundance, this fullness, than a kingdom of God?

Is not a kingdom reputed, among men, to be a collection of all goods? What then will not be the goods and riches of a kingdom where God is sovereign?

b) Bliss also consists in peace, order and harmony.

And what better expression of order and peace than a kingdom of God?

A kingdom, with all its organized, balanced forces, is already the most beautiful representation of order on earth. But what then of order and peace in a kingdom called the Kingdom of God?

c) Finally, bliss demands duration, a stable state.

Here again, what better expression of this duration than a kingdom of God?

A kingdom, because it is organized to last, is precisely what we call a state.

And what then of stability in a kingdom where God dwells?

So abundance, tranquil order, duration: a kingdom of God has it all.

Could bliss be offered to men in a more precise, more novel, more attractive form?

But is this kingdom reserved only for the next life, or does it also extend to this life, to the earth?

Obviously, the kingdom of God will only appear in all its glory in the revelation of heaven.

Nevertheless, it begins and flourishes here below.

The kingdom of God has come to you¹¹², Christ formally told the crowds who were listening to him.

The Pharisees asked him: "When will the kingdom of God come? He answered: It is among you.¹¹³ And one day, when a little child was presented to him, he said: Whoever does not accept the kingdom of God as this child does, will not enter it.¹¹⁴

So the kingdom of God is up there, and it is also down here: how can we reconcile this apparent contradiction? It's quite simple.

In eternity, the kingdom will appear as the flower appears on the stem, and the fruit on the branch; but in time, it begins, blooms and develops.

Let us bear this in mind: the kingdom of God on earth is to the kingdom of God in heaven what the germ and the flowering are to the blossoming. It is cast in germ here below, to appear and blossom there above; for earth is the place of all cultivation and flowering; heaven, the place of all blossoming and fullness. But they are substantially the same kingdom, the mode alone is different.

How simple and luminous Christ's parables about the kingdom of God appear with this doctrine!

For example, the parable of the mustard seed: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man takes and sows in his field, and it grows into a great tree.

becomes a great tree.

The blossoming of the kingdom is shown from heaven: the kingdom of heaven is a great tree; but its first fruits and its blossoming are not yet complete.

its first fruits and flowers are shown on the earth side: a mustard seed that a man takes and sows in his field.

Again, for example, the parable of the leaven: The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman takes and mixes in three measures of flour until the dough is fully leavened,

The fully leavened dough represents the heavenly side of the kingdom; but the earthly side of the same kingdom is represented by the work of the leaven in the three measures of flour.

Again, for example, the parable of the pearl: The kingdom of the two is like a merchant who is in trade and seeks beautiful pearls; having found one of very great price, he goes and sells all that he had and buys it.

The possession of the pearl is the kingdom possessed in heaven; but it is here on earth that the traffic is done, and that everything must be sold to obtain the pearl, that is, the entrance to the kingdom.

So there is only one kingdom of God, but it has two phases: a phase of blossoming and glory, in heaven; a phase of formation and progress, on earth.

It may be asked why Sovereign Wisdom has divided her kingdom into two phases.

We need only look around us to understand. Wisdom has decreed that everything on earth should begin as a germ, and then reach its full bloom:

The plant is bud and flower before becoming fruit;

Man is a child before becoming a man;

Religion was Judaism before it was Christianity;

The Church is militant before it is triumphant;

Grace was faith before it became glory.

Divine Wisdom having thus decreed that everything in His work would be subject to a law of flowering and progress, we see no reason why the kingdom of God itself should not also have been subject to this magnificent progression: and, in fact, before blossoming in the heavens, it was established that it would flower and progress on earth.

A final point to note: the link between this divine kingdom and the Catholic Church.

If something is to endure on earth, must it not descend from the ideal sphere into a positive institution?

The kingdom of God, cast in seed and flourishing on earth, must therefore also have its institution, and that is the Church. It is organized like a kingdom, and what other society, by fighting their passions and

showering them with blessings, can offer men more justice and more happiness?

Let us note, moreover, this admirable progression:

The Messiah who passed away doing good, having been announced as the Desire of the Nations, was to work, no longer only for little Judea, but for the universe. With him, happiness, whether heavenly or earthly, would cease to be the lot of the few, and become the vocation of all. This is why Jesus replaced the people of God, i.e. the Synagogue, with the kingdom of God, i.e. the Church. The people of God expanded into the kingdom of God, and the Synagogue into the Church, so that everyone could enter and be happy.

A kingdom embraces space; a kingdom of God had to embrace all spaces: this is the character of the Catholic or universal Church.

"All this enchâssure is divine," to use Pascal's word.

II

The nations were called into this enclosure, but with the freedom to leave it.

Let's talk first about their call and their radiant effect within the enclosure.

There was Gentileism before Christianity, i.e. the nations, rapidly dragged down by paganism into a state of decomposition and decrepitude. Christianity reshaped them, to save them and harmonize them with the kingdom of God they were to enter. It reshaped them, respecting with divine tact, and carefully retaining, what was good in each of them. He also used, as an element of regeneration, the new blood of the Barbarians or Germanic nations, kept in reserve by Providence. This new blood was the passive part of the regeneration of nations. Christianity breathed into these conserved elements a new spirit, a divine ferment, all the beauty and ardor of the Christian ideal, of the supernatural. Then, the nations were worthy of the setting.

They were distributed with the care that an artist takes in distributing and arranging precious stones in a jewel box. God's kingdom, or the Church, was the setting.

The first thing that strikes you about the setting is the variety within the unity: a blessing that God's kingdom spared the nations under his law of love. Small states subsist securely alongside large ones.

What a magnificent flowering of principalities, small republics, duchies, free cities, strong, glorious, sovereign as kingdoms: Genoa, Pisa, Venice, Florence! Christianity was the expression of this variety in unity.

The next striking aspect of the setting is the role providentially assigned, within the kingdom of God, to each individual nation: a role marvelously adapted to the natural qualities and genius of the nation. Italy will gloriously fulfill the teaching role it played in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in the age of its great Doctors. France will be the right arm of Christendom, bearing the sword raised to defend it against all. Spain and Portugal, with their fleets, will reach out to those backward nations that have not yet seen the light of Christian civilization. This is the destiny, the character of these nationalities transformed by the inner workings of Christianity. Each of them has a social mission in the kingdom of God.

Finally, there's one last particularity that charms and delights us: the protection that the Kingdom of God asks of the kingdoms, even the small states, that it encloses. Certainly, the Kingdom of God is the first to protect its beloved nations, since it is the one who formed them and preserves them.

Nevertheless, by virtue of that exquisite subordination which love loves to seek, the kingdom of God or the Church comes to say to each protected state: Protect me!

This mutual subordination by reverence is a large part of the brilliance and charm of the Middle Ages. It produced, in the games of its love, that delicious historical antithesis: the holy empire and the Christian republic.

The ideal and reality of the Holy Roman Empire were one and the same thing: the ideal, even more than the reality. This empire, as Charlemagne conceived it, received from the Church the coronation, and the mission of realizing the kingdom of God among men, which is why it was called the holy empire. It inherited from Rome the tradition of government, and the wisest laws that ever were, which is why it was called the Holy Roman Empire. But it retained from the Barbarians the warlike genius, a certain respect for personal independence, and the custom of not making laws without consulting the nation at least in the assembly of their chiefs: this is why it was called the Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic nation. When the Emperor, on the day of his coronation, appeared with the diadem on his head, holding the sceptre in one hand and the globe of the world in the other, with the cross, spear and sword before him, surrounded by feudal armies and deputies from the free cities of the Danube and Rhine, the crowd repeated the solemn acclamation: "Christ is victorious, Christ reigns, Christ has the empire! *Christus vincit, Christus régnât, Christus imperat!* This grand design of the Holy Empire was only realized for a moment, when Charlemagne, master of Gaul, Italy and Germania, received the homage of the Duke of the Basques, the King of Asturias, who declared himself his vassal, and the chiefs of the Irish clans, and the chiefs of the Irish clans, who named him their lord and master, while the Byzantine emperors dealt with him from power to power, and the caliph Aaroun-al- Raschid sent him the keys to the Holy Sepulchre. After these short years, the Western Empire was lost in family divisions.... But it was not so easy to put an end to a project to which Charlemagne had attached his name. But Charlemagne, like so many other workers of Providence, did more than he wanted to do. He did not succeed in rebuilding a universal monarchy, whose reign would have been the ruin of nationalities, and which would have enlisted, as it were, all peoples in the service of the same power under the same discipline. The freedom of nations resisted; they remained with their different vocations, characters and geniuses. But the name of the empire served to maintain the union of Western peoples, to found international law among them, to form that powerful family, Latinity, which gave rise to the Crusades, chivalry, scholasticism and all the great things of the Middle Ages. Thus, the empire fell only to allow the Christian republic to emerge from its ruins; and, if political unity perished, spiritual unity was established.¹¹⁵

Christian republic, we have just written. Remarkably, God's work here below is a kingdom, since it is said to be the kingdom of God; immutable, since nothing can ever destroy it or change its form, and at the end of time Christ, as foretold, will hand over the kingdom to his Father¹¹⁶ ; and yet, over a long period of centuries, we see moving at ease, in this imperturbable kingdom, what? the Christian republic, that is to say, the concert of all the states of Europe, large and small, monarchies and republics, which, protected by the Church, show themselves in turn to be its protectors. They are to the Church that encloses them what a variety of rubies, sapphires and other precious stones are to a magnificent crown of gold. Each stone has its own brilliance, its own color. The setting makes them stand out; but, in return, the crown is enhanced by their union. Thus, as protector of the States, the Church was proud and grateful for the reciprocity of their protection; and the sovereign Pontiffs perpetuated the gratitude of the kingdom of God forever by calling France the eldest daughter of the Church, Spain the most Catholic nation, Portugal the most faithful kingdom, Austria-Hungary the apostolic kingdom.

III

Assembly, outward radiance of the nations enshrined in the kingdom of God: that's what we've just read. A complement is necessary: the internal influence of the divine kingdom on each of the happy enshrined nations.

In the picture of this felicity of the nations, we only indicate the broad outlines, and even then, only

those that lead to a comparison with the Jewish people.

Christ had presented righteousness as inseparable from the kingdom of God: Seek the kingdom of God and righteousness. Righteousness was therefore to be the principal character of the nations' felicity.

What does it consist of? It is this:

To recognize the rights of others, to want them as our own, to uphold them against selfishness, is to love our neighbor as ourselves, it is Injustice! This is justice, not in the abstract, but in practice. From this real, living, concrete justice, honor was born: honor that was a Christian's elevated view of himself, . a thought of his own nobility, and also that of his neighbor. During the centuries of their enrolment in the kingdom of God, the nations flourished with this justice mingled with honor. It would be an outdated eulogy to note this beautiful flowering in chivalry, in the castle: it will suffice to recognize it among the people, in the commune.

An obscure but respected republic, the commune had a charter of rights, its own council, chiefs, militia and flag. Under this serious protection, which bound the honor of the weaker classes to that of the stronger, a rearguard of knowledge and probity was formed in Christian society, not only through the liberal arts, but also through commerce and industry, so despised by the ancients. This rearguard took its place in the destinies of Europe, and prepared for itself a more complete advent to public life. What remained of the slavery bequeathed by the old world to the new tended daily to soften, then to disappear. The worker was free, and, warned by the example of the Church, the nobility and the bourgeoisie, that any isolated man is a lost man, he joined forces to be respected. If he still had masters, he also had rights; he was no longer alone in the presence of wealth, nor alone in the presence of misfortune. Thus, from prince to pauper, from pontiff to artisan, a hierarchy was established in political Christendom, in which each had his place, his power and his honor, and in which, no one being alone, everyone was something: A vast assembly of men divided by nations, and where, despite the remaining vestiges of barbarian mores, that form of government, composed of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, which Aristotle considered the best, and of which Saint Thomas Aquinas gave after him this description, was realized: "Government is perfect in a city or in a people when one presides over all according to virtue, when he has under him great ones who share his authority according to virtue, and when finally the one and the other principate is the thing of all, either because all can elect, or because all can be elected¹. "¹¹⁷

Were nations not happy then? Justice elevates a nation¹¹⁸ : weren't they high, great and magnificent?

Christ used this comparison: "The kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed that a man takes and throws into his garden, and which grows into a great tree; so that the birds of the air rest on its branches.

"¹¹⁹ This cheerful comparison has passed, it seems, from the Gospel into the history of Christian nations, becoming there a consoling reality. The tree flourished in the Middle Ages. Doesn't the history of France depict St. Louis sitting under the oak tree at Vincennes, dispensing justice, and the people thronging around the best of monarchs? Those peasants who returned joyfully, blessing God and the king, were they not the birds of the air singing on the branches and all around?

How beautiful you have been, O nations! The Royal Prophet, inspired by the vision of your prosperity in God's kingdom, had dedicated his most enthusiastic songs of the future to you. You have fulfilled them. Nations, praise the Lord; all praise him, peoples of the earth. You praised him, and you too were worthy of praise!

IV

This beauty and prosperity were contrasted with the miserable condition of the Jews.

They, too, were tributaries of the reign of justice, but under a very different aspect: tributaries of justice

as punishment. In the midst of the nations, they were atoning for two great faults: the one known throughout the world, deicide, and another lesser-known one, their sinful conduct towards the nations. So when and how did they begin to be guilty towards the nations? As follows:

The people of Judea had been chosen as God's people, and as such showered with favors: chosen, however, not to withdraw eternally into themselves and avariciously savor their privileges, but to blossom like the plant and present its fruit, the Messiah, to the other nations who were waiting for him. Israel's role, then, was to move one day from the particular to the universal. As God's people, it was to transform itself at the time of the Messiah's coming, enlarging itself by welcoming all the nations, and forming with them, in a sublime synthesis, the kingdom of God.

But when the moment came to pass from the particular to the universal and to unite with the nations, the Jewish people felt an immense jealousy rise up in their souls. The idea of spiritual equality – of no longer being God's people alone in the future, but forming God's kingdom with the other nations; of no longer having privileges, no longer possessing the Law and the Temple, but forming a single Church with the Gentiles, with the rest of the world – in a word, spiritual equality: this prospect was unbearable! The crime of Calvary was decided, and the Jewish people did the impossible, as reported in the book of Acts, the impossible, to prevent the Gospel from being preached to the Gentiles. It did everything in their power to hinder universal religion. Even the Jews, who firmly believed in Jesus Christ, for a moment opposed this call to the Gentiles out of love for the Synagogue. This was the heresy of the Judaizers, the first and most delicate of all heresies. In a word, Judaism, blind, selfish and jealous, stood in the way of the door to the kingdom of God, to prevent the nations from passing through and entering. We know what the punishment was. The Jewish people were swept into the universal, that is, across all the nations.

So it was among them that the Jews atoned for their double fault. The punishment was fittingly adapted to their egoism and jealousy.

First of all, all their privileges as the ancient people of God had passed to the nations, insofar as they were part of God's kingdom. They had possessed Y adoption of children: they possessed it, since, through baptism, God's children were made among them. – They had possessed the glorious presence of God: they possessed it, since the tabernacle, containing the Real Presence, was established and universalized among them. – They had possessed the Covenant: they possessed it, since the divine sacraments uniting God and man were administered in their homes. – They had possessed the Law: they possessed it, since the Decalogue and the Gospel were taught and observed among them. – They had possessed the cult: they possessed it, since the priesthood was recruited among them, churches as numerous as the stars of heaven were built among them, and all the feasts, with their pomp, perfumes and rejoicings, were celebrated among them. – They had possessed the promises: they possessed them, since all the sweets of divine familiarity, graces, gifts, consolations, ecstasies, suavities, apparitions – in a word, everything good that Heaven had promised – were lavished on them.

And so, in this transfer of their ancient privileges to the nations, the Jewish people received the first striking punishment for their selfishness and jealousy.

The second was no less well inflicted: a miserable condition for them, in the face of the prosperity and felicity of the nations. While they were, as we depicted above, like precious stones set in the kingdom of God, they were like grains of wheat tossed through a sieve, and the sieve was those nations they hated. One of their prophets had foretold them, in the name of the Lord, of such a punishment: I will not cut off the house of Jacob entirely; but I will scatter them among all nations, with a commotion like that which is given to wheat when it is shaken in a sieve: not a single grain will fall to the ground, but will be pushed far away by the general shaking.¹¹²⁰ All the nations carried out this order. All were opposed to the Jews being a homogeneous people, and this people, scattered among all the others, perfectly

resembled grains of wheat that a violent agitation separates, pushing them to various parts of the sieve. Shaken in France, shaken in Spain, they went up to England; shaken in England, they went down to Morocco; shaken in Morocco, they went to Constantinople; nowhere did they find stability and security.

In contrast to this miserable condition, nations flourished, tranquil and happy.

V

There is, however, a grain-of-wheat objection to precious stones.

The messianic era, say the Jews, must coincide with the establishment of justice and peace throughout the world. Its signs will be: the transformation of weapons of war into tools of the plough; respect for the weak by the strong, the lamb by the wolf; the reconciliation of divided brothers, of Ephraim with Judah; the recognition and love of a single supreme Father; the reuniting of all men, a single flock led by a single Shepherd; the universal gathering of peoples on the mountain of the Eternal; and finally, according to an ambitious hope, the whole world – now the Holy Land.

But can we say that these providential signs of the blessed era have already been realized?

Far from it, the Jews add: and so they cite in support the disorders of every kind, the wars, the savage episodes that have never ceased to darken or disfigure the nations, notwithstanding their enshrinement in the so-called kingdom of God.

They draw the conclusion that the Messiah has not come.

The refutation is easy.

Let us first consider the providential signs of the blessed era. – Didn't they begin to come to fruition with the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth, the only book of justice and peace? And their realization has not ceased since. Is not the Church, which applies the Gospel, the kingdom of justice and peace? Is she not the mountain where the nations have come together? Is she not the refuge of the weak from the strong, and of the lamb from the wolf? Is it not the fold where the one Shepherd opens his arms to all men, to all peoples? Only, all these providential signs accumulated in the Church develop over the generations, so that her mission of justice and peace is successive with the centuries. This is fortunate for every century. If only one century had concentrated in itself the signs of the coming Messiah, what would have been left for the others to do? On the contrary, each century bears witness, with the seal of Emmanuel, that it belongs, by its progress, to the messianic era, to the blessed epoch. Thus, one brings to the common account the clearing of the land of Europe; another, the institution of schools and legislation; another, cathedrals; another, the Truce of God; this one, Scholasticism and the Summa of Thomas Aquinas; that one, chivalry; this other, the Crusades; this other, the discovery of the New World; this other, the works of Saint Vincent de Paul. In this way, the kingdom of God, which dates from the messianic era, subject, like everything else on earth, to the law of flowering and growth, will have presented, in the succession of centuries, the aspect of an ever-ripening, ever-growing harvest; and so we understand that the consummation of the centuries is what the Gospel announces: the fullness of maturity and gathering in the heavenly granaries.

From providential signs, let's move on to the remnants of barbarism among the nations. – Yes, undoubtedly, the nations, notwithstanding their call into the kingdom of God, have presented, by their vices, their deviations and their wars, contradictions with this kingdom and with the coming of the Messiah. But we mustn't forget what state they were in when this divine kingdom accepted them in your place, unfaithful children of Israel! They were emerging from the state of gentility, a state of nature and barbarism: you yourselves were full of contempt for this state.

The Church, entrusted with the kingdom of God, undertook their education. Because of human

freedom, and also because of the tenacity of all that is nature, if it takes years to correct defects in an individual, it takes centuries to correct them in a nation. And the Church, which, like God, is patient because it is eternal, the Church has used centuries to correct the defects of nations. Ah, if it had been up to her alone to ensure and fix happiness, the world would long ago have seen the fulfillment of the prophecy of swords transformed into ploughshares, and the ambitious hope of the whole earth becoming the Holy Land. But as a measured educator, the Church knew it had to fight the remnants of the state of nature, and was careful not to demand of nations still in their infancy the qualities admired in the robust and perfect man. Nevertheless, under her lessons, which were as respectful as they were tender, nations slowly but surely corrected the defects of their respective natures. Italy corrected itself, France corrected itself, Spain corrected itself, they all corrected themselves. Just as the nations ceased to be Gentiles and became Christians on their arrival and in their reunion within the Church, so their progress was designated by a new name in the world, civilization: from the barbarians they were when the Jews awaited the Messiah in Palestine, they became civilized when the Messiah had passed.

Poor grains of wheat shaken in the sieve of justice, have you really come to draw conclusions against Christ from the dross of precious stones? If you seek arguments against the Kingdom of God in the shortcomings of the nations, what terrible arguments would you not have found in your own shortcomings, when you bore the title of God's people! But you were recognized as such.

Let's complete the refutation of the objection with a look at the vicissitudes of the kingdom of God. – These vicissitudes, which consist of alternations of brilliance and obscurity, of power and weakness, constitute one of the most beautiful proofs of the coming of the Messiah: in that they denote a perfect harmony between the Messianic reign and the person of the Messiah, between the king and the kingdom.

Is it not a principle of philosophy that the effect must always reflect the attributes of the cause? Thus: in creation we see the vestiges of the Creator, the outpourings of his beauty, power and goodness.

In other words, perfect harmony must have been established between the Messianic person and the Messianic reign, so that the characteristics of the one are also the characteristics of the other.

Now, what were the salient features of Jesus' physiognomy? Contrasts. Something of the famous pillar of cloud and fire that guided Israel in the desert was reproduced in him: Jesus was both luminous and obscure. He was born in a stable, between two animals: but an angelic army appeared in the air to celebrate his birth; he was ignored in Bethlehem, but a marvelous star brought the Magi to him from the depths of the East. And so it is with his public life and death, where contrasts of light and shadow, alternations of power and weakness, call out to each other without clashing, and sustain each other by commanding respect, astonishment and love. These contrasts have struck all elite minds, from Saint Augustine to Pascal. Pascal said: "What man was ever more brilliant? The entire Jewish people predicted him, before he came. The Gentiles adore him, after his coming. Both Gentile and Jewish people look to him as their center. And yet, what man ever enjoys less of all this brilliance? Of thirty-three years, he lived thirty without appearing. Never has a man had so much brilliance; never has a man had so much ignominy." And this great geometer of exact thought gives the reason for these contrasts: "We hear nothing," he says, "of the works of God, if we do not take as a principle that he wished to blind some, and enlighten others." 121

Now let's look at the Church, the kingdom of Jesus. The same contrasts continue: the foundation resembles the founder. In it, as in him, there are alternations of power and weakness, no less astonishing, no less harmonious, no less sustained, no less triumphant. Light and shadows in its Catholicity: peoples leave it, others come to it; its scope is perpetually modified, without being surpassed, however, by rival religions. – Light and shadows in its sanctity: alongside the best laws, abuses occur, and amid legions of angels, scandals appear; but its sanctity is unaffected. "Who ever judged the Ocean by the foam it casts

up on its shores, or by the storms that stir its waves? The Ocean is not in the impure debris of its shores, nor in the inclemency of its storms: it is in the depth and breadth of its waters, in the paths it opens to the commerce of all races, in the solemnity of its repose, in the magnificence of its emotions, in the abyss of its noise as in the abyss of its silence ; and, when the sailor, carried on his tranquil vaults, suddenly sees them tremble and rumble, he does not blame the God who made this sublime immensity, he only blames his weakness, and with his forehead on the ground, on the plank of his ship, he implores F étoile who leads all, and who pacifies all. "122 - Light and shadow in the dispositions of his own subjects: sometimes the kingdom of God is favored and supported, sometimes it is restricted and fought against. The jealousy of princes is as famous as their devotion; and the life of the Church, in the tributes and tribulations that come to her from the civil powers, recalls these two days in the life of Christ: the crowds wanted to make him king because he had fed five thousand men in the desert; and the people of Nazareth chased him out of their town, leading him to the top of the mountain on which it was built, to throw him down; but, says the Gospel, he passed through the midst of them, and was going¹²³ ; and his reign, too, passes through the midst of difficulties, and is still going.

And this is the perfect and magnificent harmony that exists between the characteristics of the Messianic person and the characteristics of the Messianic reign, between the qualities of Christ and the qualities of the Church. And here is how the cause shines in the effect, how the effect reflects the properties of the cause; admirable kinship, which convinces us that the finger of God is there, and which elicits this exclamation: Hosanna to the king, hosanna to the reign! Whoever meditates on Christ can say what his reign must be like; and whoever meditates on his reign can say what Christ must have been like. This is one of the most grandiose and unassailable aspects of Christianity, which has overwhelmed and delighted my intelligence, and against which neither chance nor anything human can be invoked. If to this day my ancestors have not seen it, it is because, on the terrible night of Caiaphas' tribunal, the adorable face of Christ was covered with a veil, among other outrages, and that, by a penal consequence, the veil passed from the face to the reign. Or rather, neither the face nor the reign have it any more, but it remains, alas! as a thick bandage, over blinded eyes and hardened foreheads.¹²⁴

May mercy deign to remove it!

CHAPTER II

WHAT REMAINED OF THE BEAUTIFUL ORGANIZATION OF NATIONS ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE EMPIRE

I. Beautiful remains, but saddening. Part of the nations has more or less left the enclosure of the kingdom of God, through Protestantism. -

II. Europe's civilizing missions interrupted or considerably diminished. -

III. Royal authority seriously compromised: the cave of the Pythoness of Endor reappears in the history of monarchies. -

IV. However, the 15th century still presents this consoling spectacle: the kingdom of God linked to the kingdoms of the earth. The melancholy of the kingdom of God as it nears the breaking point. -

V. The Revolution of 1789, like a thunderbolt of pride, announces the cessation of this ancient state of affairs, and bequeaths to the next century the realization of this distressing program: the kingdom of God without the kingdoms of the earth, and the kingdoms of the earth without the kingdom of God. The Jews alone will gain from the separation.

I

Let's place ourselves at the end of the 15th century, on the eve of the Revolution and the reign of

Napoleon. The nations, whose efflorescence began vigorously with Charlemagne (in the year 800), have completed a brilliant thousand-year career. What remains of them, on the threshold of new times?

What do we see of their brilliant career and superb organization?

Beautiful remains, but remains!

First of all, many of them have all but disappeared from God's kingdom.

"You are no longer children," had whispered the voice of the demon of self-righteousness in the ears of the nations, through the mouth of the apostate monk Luther; and the nations of northern Europe had, unfortunately, repeated: We are no longer children! As if, in the eyes of the tactful and reverent Church, there were no glory and profit in always remaining her child. They added: "Let's break its yoke and throw it over our heads! And, encouraging and training each other, they abandoned the bosom of the Church.

And so it was that Germany, Prussia, Switzerland, England and the Scandinavian countries had more or less left the confines of the Kingdom of God.

We say: just about out;

If they have withdrawn from the kingdom, they nevertheless retain a certain appearance of loyalty to the King. Rebellious children, they no longer love their holy mother the Church, but they still claim to love Jesus, their father. What's more, they live on what they took with them when they fled. For, according to a very apt comparison that has been used: "even in the branches ostensibly separated from their primordial stem, the Church maintains a regenerating sap and produces effects whose honor belongs to her. She is still the bond of schism, the very cement of heresy; what remains of her substance and cohesion comes from the blood she has spilled and which has not yet dried up, just as we see branches that have fallen to the ground under the trunk that bore them still retain vegetation sensitive to light and dew. Death does not come in a day to the spirits illuminated by truth. They long retain the reflections that illuminate them, the impulses that animate them. 125"

It is these beautiful remnants that have maintained, through the centuries of schism, the vitality of Protestant nations, particularly England. A magnificent ship, she was built in the Church's shipyards; but, alas! her flag no longer bears her mother's colors!

II

Other remains.

The vocation of the nations won over to Jesus Christ and his Church was superb. It no longer consisted in extending one's own frontiers, to the detriment of one's neighbors. Such had been the glory of the pagan peoples, especially the Romans, the greatest of all: but what was that glory? tears and blood. This was good for races that Christianity had not yet touched with its finger. Far higher was the vocation of the Christian races, whose object was to spread the truth, to enlighten nations less advanced towards God, and to bring them, at the price of labor and the chance of death, eternal goods, faith, justice and civilization.

But since the emergence of Protestantism, this civilizing mission has been considerably diminished. Bow your heads, Christian nations: If barbarism is still on your doorstep, if Islamism is still encamped in one of Europe's most beautiful locations, if Asia is still immobilized, despotic and polygamous, if the coasts of Palestine and poor Africa are in a state of degradation which forms a painful contrast with the great memories of history, if America is experiencing bloody upheavals; bow your heads, the cause lies in your failure to observe God's mandate! The sublime Christian religion, which was given to you as the banner of the future, of conquest and civilization, has become in your hands a flag of discord. The resources and genius accumulated on your continent for the regeneration of the rest of the universe have been

devoured in fratricidal wars. After Europe had been covered in blood and mourning, the scandal was transported before the peoples of the new world; and these peoples remained stunned at the spectacle of the misery, hatred and spirit of vengeance that reigned among these men whom they had first made demigods! This is the thought, the accusation of a son of Catholic Spain, Jacques Balmès; it's terrible, but it's true. He rightly accuses Luther's schism of having thwarted the universal impetus of civilization, and of having partly ruined Europe's beneficent missions 126.

However, in the midst of the breakdown of the European concert, there were still some fine remnants of these civilizing missions at the end of the 15th century. Although the State was no longer itself a missionary, it protected missionaries. The Catholic apostle, who goes to water the Indian or American forests with his sweat and blood, can count on the assistance of the nation to which he belongs; and, transported almost always by the vessels of the State, he feels the patriotic pride mingling with the apostolic flame. The Kingdom of God, full of reverence and consideration for nations, has turned the tables: no longer officially led or protected by the Powers, it has entrusted itself to the missionaries and religious orders that have emerged from these Powers. He said to himself, in his embarrassment, but also with a merciful delicacy: since the cedars no longer wish to protect me and serve my advancement, the reeds and rushes will provide me with boats! -

And the reeds came from France, Italy and Spain, nations always dear to me!

III

If decline has diminished the number of faithful nations, and if their civilizing mission has been lessened, one institution will undoubtedly remain intact in their bosom: royal authority?

Alas, no.

Bossuet once said: "Kings, no more than the sun, have not received in vain the radiance that surrounds them. From the 15th century onwards, this radiance has diminished, because kings have received it in vain. They themselves compromised their authority.

To understand this eclipse, it is important to consider both the place monarchs had been offered in God's kingdom, and the place they suddenly took elsewhere.

Their reserved place in God's kingdom has been described in a brilliant symbol. One day, a prophet of Israel had a vision, which he recounted thus:

"The angel of the Lord showed me a golden candlestick, and seven lamps burning on its branches.

"And I also saw two olive trees rising up, one on the right of the golden candlestick and the other on its left.

"And I said to the angel, 'My lord, what is this? What do these two olive trees around the candlestick mean, one on its right and the other on its left?

"And the angel answered and said to me: These two olive trees are the two sons of the Holy Oil, who attend and watch over the Dominator of all the earth L".

Now, here is one of the most beautiful explanations of this mysterious vision given by the sacred interpreters:

The golden candlestick is the Catholic Church, homeland of light, truth and the kingdom of God.

The two sons of holy oil, watching over the candlestick, are the priesthood and royalty, the Pontiff and the Prince. Both, in fact, are sons of holy oil. For the holy chrism makes pontiffs, and the coronation makes kings. And both were guardians together around the Catholic Church, like the two olive trees around the golden candlestick. Priesthood watched on the right, royalty on the left. The Pontiff guarded the covenant with the censer, the King with the sword. The Pontiff taught truth, and the Prince enforced justice! Let's imagine this mystical golden candelabra carrying flames on all its branches, that is to say, the Catholic Church in a beautiful time of light, peace and serenity. Then, let's imagine the candlestick's bright flames spreading their glow: on the right, on the tiara of pontiffs; on the left, on the

crown of princes; on the right, on faces like those of Saint Peter, Saint Gregory, Saint Leo, and the whole chain of pontiffs; on the left, on faces like those of Constantine, Charlemagne, Saint Louis, and the whole chain of Christian kings. Picture all this, this golden candelabra, these bright flames, these noble faces, these great names, this peace, this serenity, and you will have, in this ensemble, an image of those fortunate times when, to advance the kingdom of God, there was union between Pontiff and Prince, between priesthood and royalty!

But all of a sudden, the kings left their place and exchanged it for another. Where did they go?

To an underground cavern.

In that cavern, people were conspiring against the kingdom of God, and the kings were there, complicit in the conspiracy. We have only to choose from the many documents on secret societies:

In Germany, Freemasonry had attracted princes to its mysteries. After Frederick of Prussia and most of the Protestant princes, the Catholic princes themselves had allowed themselves to be seduced. François de Lorraine, husband of Marie-Thérèse, was initiated in 1731 at a lodge in The Hague, under the presidency of Count Ghesterfield. Thanks to this secret protection, despite the bulls of Clement XII and Benedict XIV and the edict of Emperor Charles VI (1738), Masonry spread stealthily throughout the Empire.

Affiliated with the lodges from his youth, Joseph II surrendered himself completely to advanced Freemason advisors. The destruction of religious orders, the confiscation of Church property, the separation of bishops from the Pope, the civil education given to seminarians – these were the Masonic tasks that the unfortunate emperor accomplished with an ardor bordering on mania, encouraged by a concert of adulation in which his perfidious advisors bitterly mingled derision.

The impetus given by Joseph II spread throughout the Empire.

In France, Freemasonry had not yet ascended the throne, but it was occupying the steps.

The Grand Master of the new Order of the Temple was successively the Duc du Maine, the Comte de Clermont, the Prince de Conti, and then the Duc de Cossé-Brissac, who held the title of Grand Master at the time of the Revolution.

For Freemasonry to move from doctrinal propaganda and moral influence to political action, it needed to concentrate and organize. In 1779, Freemasonry was divided into a large number of rites. It is remarkable to note that the Duc de Chartres, later Philippe Égalité 1, was the pivotal figure in the concentration of the lodges.

It is clear from these documents (Thistoire provides only too many others) that sovereigns themselves undermined the basis of their authority. Most of them, caught between royal duty and the suggestions of sects, secretly favored what they publicly condemned. The Christian constitution of their peoples, the virtuous habits of their populations, the ancient traditions of their homes, obliged them to disavow the mores of the underground, but on the sly, in person or through their emissaries, they participated in them. They prepared their own death warrant. Gela reminds us of the end of the first king of the Jewish nation, for nothing is new under the sun:

Saul, who at the beginning of his reign had expelled the magicians and diviners from the lands of Israel in order to fulfill the Law of Moses, returns to them when he begins to act badly. He secretly consults the Pythoness of Endor. This consultation takes place on the eve of his fall and death. It is there, in a dark cave, that he learns

I Dêschamps, les Sociétés secrètes, t. II, p. 3-4, 89-90. .

La Prépondérance juive, II. the fate reserved for him; the page from Scripture is striking:

"His servants come and tell him, 'There is a woman in Endor who has the spirit of a python.

"Saul disguises himself, takes on other clothes, and leaves accompanied by just two men. He comes to the woman by night, and says to her, 'Consult the spirit of the python for me, and call upon him whom

I shall tell you.

The woman replied: "You know everything Saul did, and how he wiped out the magicians and soothsayers from all his lands. Why are you setting a trap for me to lose my life?"

Saul swore by the Lord and said to her, "Long live the Lord, no harm shall come to you from this.

The woman said to him, "Whom shall I send for you?"

He replied, "Bring me Samuel.

When the woman saw Samuel appear, she cried out loudly and said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? for you are Saul.

The king said to her, "Do not be afraid; what did you see? - The woman said to Saul, "I saw a God coming out of the earth.

Saul said to her, "How is he made? - She said, "It's an old man in a cloak. Saul recognized that it was Samuel, and made a deep bow to him, stooping to the ground.

"Samuel said to Saul: Why have you disturbed my rest, by having me evoked? The Lord will do to you as I have told you from him. He will tear your kingdom apart 1"

< 1st Book of Kings, chap. xxviii.

Saul's dark and striking evening with the sorceress was repeated in the history of monarchies in the XV century of the Christian era. Princes have alliances with the underground. And that's where their death warrant comes from¹.

IV

Notwithstanding the division of Europe into Protestant and Catholic nations; notwithstanding the paralysis of its civilizing mission abroad; notwithstanding the infidelity of kings; notwithstanding the universal and lamentable alteration of morals, of which we say nothing because everything has been said on this sad subject; notwithstanding the considerable breach caused to faith and reason by Jansenism and philosophism : the XVth century still presented the consoling spectacle of the kingdom of God linked to the kingdoms of the earth, especially in France!

1 The infidelity of kings was summed up in this eloquent indictment: "Not to mention the princes who became Protestants in order to seize the property and authority of the Church, who compromised the rights and weakened the honor of the Holy See more than Louis XIV? who was its more implacable adversary than the parliaments of Louis XV? what were Catherine II, Frederick II, Joseph II, if not declared enemies of the Church? Where did the governments of France, Spain, Portugal and Naples stand with regard to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, when together with other powers they threatened Clement XIV with the last excesses if he did not suppress a venerable institute in the Church, whose only crime was to have shed his blood and sweat throughout the universe for the glory of God, and to have constantly shown himself the intrepid servant of the apostolic keys? Is it not obvious that Protestantism, Jansenism and rationalism had ascended the thrones of Europe, and that from their very steps a parricidal conspiracy had been hatched against the Papacy? The French Revolution fell like thunder in the midst of these plans..."

Since Tolbiac, error and heresy had never come close to the soul of a French king, and the only one who had been afflicted far from the steps of the throne had been able to ascend it only by receiving at Saint-Denis, through a necessary abjuration, the still unblemished anointment of French royalty. The moment has become solemn. One senses that two bloods flow at once in the shared veins of nations: the fertile blood of Christian antiquity and the enervated blood of corrupting skepticism.

The attitude of the Kingdom of God, at this moment, brings to mind the touchingly outstretched wings of which the Gospel speaks, when Christ wanted to gather the ungrateful children of Jerusalem under their tenderness: the Church too, towards the end of the XV century, would like to hold the nations in her bosom, under her wings, but they are preparing to leave them.

Yes, there really is a melancholy in the Church at this poignant time. The alarms of the Supreme Pontiffs, the warnings of the Bishops, the groans of pious souls, have remained the sad and distressing expression of it. The Gospel had said, at the joyful dawn of the Gentiles called: The kingdom of God is at hand... It has come to you; now funeral signs were saying: The kingdom of God is departing, the nations no longer want it. It would be a mistake, however, to think that the kingdom of God could go away; it remains, but the nations that no longer dwell with it go away and drift away: and this is what caused the melancholy of the Church. She was Jeremiah over ruins she didn't prophesy - a mother closes her eyes to the future! - but that she foresaw. A page of touching sadness will help our description of this melancholy, and we'll say, afterwards, why we insist on it:

"The loss of a nationality is one of the misfortunes of the human race that most calls for sympathy. 11 There is something so sacred in the homeland, that when we read history and come to one of those moments when God, by an inscrutable judgment, takes the life of a nation, we are seized by a love for this failing homeland, already vanished in the distant ages, that would like to resurrect it as if it were our own. We long to fight with its unhappy defenders, we envy the fate that laid them low, and that melancholy glory that finished peoples leave on their grave for their last heroes. Centuries have passed; the grass has grown on the humble mound of Philopœmen and Arminius; the Achaean League and the tribes of Germania will never wake up to mourn there again: but God, who is great in his justice, is also great in his mercy, and he has made an immortal homeland out of the heart of man for all those who have lost theirs. while remaining by their courage worthy of one. The end of a great people is a sight to be wept over; even the victors are not insensitive to it: Scipio wept when he saw Carthage fall in flames, and when people were astonished, he replied: I'm thinking of the day of Rome! Religion, accustomed as it is to seeing nations die like men, also has secret and tender tears for these immense misfortunes that attest to the caducity of all..."

1 Lacordaire, Letter on the Holy See.

This page is very touching. Well, secret and tender tears were falling from the eyes of the Church at the end of the XVth century: for immense misfortunes were afoot!

We shall be forgiven for insisting on this melancholy of the Church, bearing in mind that it is a son of Israel who holds the pen. Admitted to the great Catholic family, he understands better than anyone, through the fate of Jerusalem, now a dead city, what fear and sadness there must be in the heart of the Church with regard to her beloved nations. Bossuet, recalling the chastisement of the Jewish people and the warning that Saint Paul drew from it for the nations, said: "Who will not tremble when he hears the words of the Apostle¹²⁷ 128? Can we fail to be appalled by the vengeance that has been unleashed so terribly on the Jews for so many centuries, since Saint Paul warns us on God's behalf that our ingratitude will bring us such treatment¹²⁹?" Would that Bossuet had not been forced to write, even in his own time: "Our ingratitude will bring us such treatment!"

The era of ruin for nationalities and homelands was about to begin. Through Protestantism, the genius of evil and devastation had begun the sinister breach: but France had long been the wall of resistance.

This time, the wall is about to give way, and

DE L'ORGANISATION DES NATIONS 167 the ancient organization of kingdoms will be pulverized: Magna cadavera Nationum!

X

The hurricane is unleashed: it's 1793.

"Then, on the debris of the altar and the throne, on the bones of the priest and the sovereign, began the reign of force, the reign of hatred and terror; frightful fulfillment of this prophecy: A whole people will rush, man against man, neighbor against neighbor, and, with a great tumult, Venfant will rise against the old man, the rabble against the great; because they set their tongue and their inventions against

Dieud." To paint this appalling scene of disorder and crime, of dissolution and carnage, this orgy of doctrines, this confused clash of all interests and passions, this mixture of proscriptions and impure celebrations, these cries of blasphemy, these sinister chants, this continuous thud of the hammer that demolishes, of the axe that strikes lives – times; these terrible detonations and roars of joy, the gloomy announcement of a vast massacre; these widowed cities, these rivers cluttered with corpses, these temples and cities in ashes, and murder, and voluptuousness, and weeping, and blood; it would be necessary to borrow from hell its language, as some monsters borrowed from it

1 Isaiah, chap. m, 5, 8.

its fury. "Voltaire once said: "If the world were governed by atheists, it would be better to be under the immediate rule of these infernal beings, who are depicted as raging against their victims. Atheists governed France, and in the space of a few months, they accumulated more ruin than an army of Tartars could have left in Europe during ten years of invasion. Never since the beginning of the world had such destructive power been given to man *.

All this was only the first act of the drama of the Revolution, but what a first act it was, great God! it gave a clear indication that the Christian organization of nations had come to an end. It was a thunder of pride that announced, not in the manner of Isaiah: new heavens, new earth, but new earth without heavens. And lest anyone misunderstand the meaning of the revolutionary program, an unprecedented fact was interspersed among the ruins: the introduction of Jews into legislation and society, while Christ was eliminated. At the same time, the Rights of Man brought in enemies, and dismissed the Friend who loved the Franks.

All this, once again, was only the first act, the first part of the program, and already we must logically deduce from it the preparation for Jewish preponderance. We have explained this at length in the course of this book. But we ask the reader's permission to remind him of it in a quick and striking reasoning, to serve as a link with what is to follow.

1 Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*, chap. x.

Here is an undeniable and admirably formulated principle:

"Christianity is the very law of life:

"No society has perished, no royal race has died out, no power has passed away except for having violated the law of life contained in Christianity.

a Just as no society has been founded, no royal race has flourished, no power has persevered, except by observing the law of life contained in Christianity.

The Christian nations, in coming into being and developing with the luxury of flourishing that was theirs for fifteen centuries, had obeyed this law of life contained in Christianity. And so they prevailed over the Jewish people by all the distance there is between grace united with nature and nature left to its own forces, between divine help sustaining human effort and human effort acting alone. The Christian nations presented the incomparable spectacle of grace united with nature, of divine help sustaining human effort. The Jews, on the other hand, were hard-working but solitary nature, human effort proudly alone. That's why the nations outweighed the Jewish people by a thousand cubits: they were splendid, he was puny compared to them.

But from the day the nations superbly rejected Christianity, things had to change.

To reject Christianity was, for them, to violate the law of life that had made them what they were, to do without God's help and yet to flatter themselves that they could live and have abundant life by the forces of nature alone, as the Jews did. Well, the nations have foolishly misjudged themselves. Yes, with the help of Christianity, they were far superior to the Jewish people. Apart from Christianity, they were in danger of becoming inferior.

Indeed, as soon as the struggle and competition are established from the point of view of the forces of

nature alone, the nations will struggle with difficulty with the Jewish people. He is better organized to win than any of them. I don't believe it! Here's a race that has sprung from Abraham's sturdy flanks, spanning the centuries, defying all climates, fit for all jobs, adept at all ruses, adept at all expedients, indomitable, united in all its members, indestructible : a race that you, the nations, despite the immense superiority you derived from the Christian faith, had to repress ceaselessly to prevent it from rising, that you had to surround with a thousand fetters to prevent it from escaping and dominating you; and now, at the very moment when, in your delirium of 1789, you are granting this race complete freedom, you yourselves are getting rid of your aegis, you are rejecting the Christian faith! A thousand times madness, blindness, stupidity!

So it will be a pity to see beautiful France languish, proud Germany ruin herself, cheerful Italy wither, cold England give herself over to anxiety, in the face of the sons of the Jewish race who will everywhere raise their heads and ascend!... Nations, why have you ceased to be Christians? It's not so much the Jews who should be blamed as yourselves: they haven't changed, but you yourselves have changed: you've lowered yourselves and surrendered yourselves to them. Why did you proclaim that Christian truth would have no more privileges, no more rights? With your own hands, you have knocked down your palisades, and the Jews have entered to conquer you.

The end of the last century was devoted to these fearsome and lamentable premises. In the space of eleven years, a great deal of wicked work had been done.

But the Revolution has a second stage to complete, a second act of its drama to play out. Having dismissed Christ, it must now dismiss his Church. Having deposed the king, the next step is to destroy and uproot the kingdom. This will take longer. The Revolution therefore bequeaths to the next century this second part of the program to be fulfilled: the kingdom of God without the kingdoms of the earth, and the kingdoms of the earth without the kingdom of God. Separation must result in mutual ruin. And so the program of the Lodges announces it: use all means to isolate the Church, use all means to isolate the kingdoms, and destroy them in their respective isolation. Masonic manuals display, with Voltaire's laughter, the hopes of this double destruction. Will they come true?

The kingdom of God will always go its way. He blesses the cooperation of kingdoms, his auxiliaries, but he can do without them. Whatever may be the future state and people's way of being, that way of being will find the Church helpful, but independent and confident in her own immortal destinies.

Accustomed to defections, she is also sure of compensations. Her majestic Catholicity resembles the giant rivers, those paths that walk, as Pascal calls them, those

172 GE THAT REMAINED OF THE ORG. DES NATIONS powerful workers who sweep away huge masses of land in their current, whole swathes of forest with their draperies of verdant lianas and age-old trees: when they reach their mouths, they form those famous deltas, those unexpected extensions of territory, where then whole cities are built up as if by magic. The kingdom of God, likewise and even better, devours like these giants of the waters through the word of its missionaries, the sweat of its workers of all kinds and the blood of its martyrs, the kingdom of God, this tireless worker, drags and carries away peoples and races: it would tear up continents rather than fail in its Catholicity! So it will always go its way, whether the Revolution wishes it to or not, whether the kingdoms of the earth remain its tributaries or become isolated from it.

A similarly secure future does not await the kingdoms of the earth in isolation from the kingdom of God.

Let's take up Penchas- sure's comparison:

Disenchanted from the kingdom of God, what can become of them? Alas, what becomes of the disenchanted stones of a diadem. Pearls, rubies and diamonds fall into the realm of the vulgar. They go astray, they circulate without public honor; we end up losing track of them.

Will this not be the fate of kingdoms and princes? Some will become wanderers, others will disappear. Here again, in a kind of mockery, the Jews reappear. Great purchasers of precious stones in the past, they are preparing to be, of royal estates, in the future.

CHAPTER III

NAPOLEON'S DISORGANIZATION OF NATIONS IN PREPARATION FOR JEWISH DOMINATION

I. The Chariot of God's Glory in the Bible and the Chariot of Glory ridden by the Emperor.

Contradiction between the powerful organizer and his work of disorganization: how it is explained. – II. The Concordat given to France, but religion vassalized: religious disorganization. – III. The ambition to be a new Charlemagne in the midst of the Latin nations, but Babylonian covetousness; the duel with England, but the continental blockade; the jumble of peoples and their interests: political disorganization. – IV. The tutelary promulgation of the Code Napoleon, but the crumbling of fortunes and families: domestic and social disorganization. – V. The human person covered in glory, but treated as a means to an end, and drawn into the unbridled passion to achieve: moral disorganization. – VI. Now, vassal religion, the jumble of peoples, the crumbling of fortunes, the unbridled passion to succeed, will favor the advent of Jewish preponderance.

I

Napoleon was the man who would shatter the old framework.

The Revolution sensed his genius and his weakness, which was a passion for glory. Taking advantage of him as he would take advantage of her, mistress and slave, she set out to exploit this passion. She will continue her work not only with streams of blood, as in 93, but also with streams of glory.

Napoleon, in his turn, seized the living forces of the Revolution, which, tired of bubbling up in their own crater and falling in on themselves, were seeking to spread outwards and overflowing towards conquest.

What would be their mutual goal? For her, to circumnavigate the globe; for him, to push back the boundaries of glory. The two goals, the two enthusiasms, would often merge.

When we look in the Bible for something to help explain the passage of this brilliant and bloody meteor, we find the "chariot of God's glory". It seems as if the Revolution, usurper of divine sovereignty, was intent on providing one of its sons, who promised to render it the most brilliant services, with a chariot similar to the one that has remained famous in biblical splendor. The prophet describes it as follows:

There was a person in the figure (Tun man, in the midst of great brilliance, seated on a throne of sapphire, which itself rested on a vault like the firmament. This vault was supported by four extraordinary animals, beside which moved four wheels. In their ardor, they resembled burning coals of fire. They came and went like sparkling lightning. They had wings and, to serve their impetuosity better, their feet were so made that at a given command they had no need to turn, but went swiftly straight ahead, in any direction. The four wheels were full of them. Animals and wheels, as they marched, made a noise like the sound of a great army, the sound of a camp.

Thus was made the chariot of God's glory, contemplated by the prophet L

The Revolution inspired its Caesar to ride in such a chariot:

On the chariot of his glory, Napoleon stands alone; he tolerates no figure beside his own. He holds the thunder. His armies carry him, with rapid movements, to the heart and borders of all kingdoms. He criss-crosses Europe. His eyes are everywhere. No affair escapes the lightning bolts of his genius; no people can escape the crushing of his wheels, if they resist, or the glare of his triumph, if they submit. Chariot of pride, where do you hope to end up?

This hurricane-like Caesar presents a strange contrast: he is the man of order, and his work is disorder;

he is the powerful organizer, and the result is disorganization. "After having laid siege to the forts of Cadiz, after having held the keys to Lisbon and Madrid, Vienna and Berlin, Naples and Rome, after having made the cobblestones of Moscow tremble under the roll of his cannons, he will leave France less great than he took it, bleeding from its wounds, dismantled, open, impoverished and humiliated 130 131.

The explanation for this antithesis, which is evident throughout the imperial oeuvre, is quite simple: He is order, in the form of Empire, but the Revolution, his cooperator, is disorder. He is the architect, but she levels. He is the sword, but she is the hammer. He is conqueror, but she is cyclone. He has a goal, but she makes him surpass it.

And it's not just outside, in imperial ventures, that the opposition is striking: the Emperor carries it inside, himself a battlefield. The Revolution, which was constantly breathing down his neck, nullified the Emperor's assertions, and he, in turn, wanted to suppress the Revolution's negations. 11 feels he has the qualities of a founder, and she gives him the gestures of a destroyer. His faults are magnified by it, to the extreme: it is a diabolical sap that makes all faults blossom and overflow. Woe betide the genius that has grafted itself onto it! It degrades Napoleon. She won't let him remain a deist, so he becomes a persecutor. Born a lion, she turned him into a tiger in the ditches of Vincennes. She always drags him further than his goal.

So, notwithstanding the power of his genius and his arm applied to steering the chariot of glory, he will not be master of the steeds. The fact is, in the harness there are those black steeds of which Plato spoke, the passions! No one has ever been master of these black steeds, whose bit was removed by the Revolution. They carry the Emperor and the chariot of glory along all the roads of Europe and in all the affairs of the world, and also through all the excesses.

People have watched this chariot of glory and pride go by, with admiration and terror.

Filled with these two sentiments, we have stooped to the traces of its passage, to fully appreciate the furrows dug and the goal achieved. Apparent organization and profound disorganization, that's what we discover; and along the shining ruts walk the sons of Israel, intent on taking advantage of the disorganization.

Let's get down together, dear reader: the study is worth it.

II

When Bonaparte, as First Consul, understood the need to put an end to disorder, and judged that religion had to be revived and, to this end, Catholicism, the ancient belief of France, to which the majority of the nation still belonged, had to fight against an infinite number of revolutionary prejudices; he fought, and his genius never inspired him better. He had a marvelous ability to conceive the grandiose, to grasp it, and to determine the possible extent of its realization. This was the secret of his extraordinary fascination. His mobile, ardent spirit was therefore passionate about the restoration of Catholicism, with a sincerity that may have been fleeting, but was courageous at the time of its manifestation.

The Concordat was the result of this sincerity.

Jewish Preponderance, II.

It was on Easter Day, April 18 1802, that Paris and France learned of this kind of resurrection. Let the historian of this great moment speak for himself:

"On Easter morning, the Concordat was published in all the districts of Paris, with great pomp and circumstance, and by the principal authorities. While this publication was taking place in the streets of the capital, the First Consul, who wished to solemnize in the same day all that was happy for France, exchanged the ratifications of the Treaty of Amiens at the Tuileries. This important formality completed, he set off for Notre-Dame, followed by the leading bodies of the State and a large number

of civil servants of every order, a brilliant staff and a crowd of women of the highest rank. A long line of carriages made up this magnificent procession. Troops from the first military division, assembled in Paris, lined the hedge from the Tuileries to the metropolis. The Archbishop of Paris processioned to receive the First Consul at the church door, and presented him with holy water. The new head of state was led under the canopy to the place reserved for him. The Senate, the Corps législatif and the Tribunat were lined up on either side of the altar. Behind the First Consul stood the generals in full uniform, more obedient than converted, some even displaying a less than decent bearing. As for him, clad in the red habit of the Consuls, motionless, with a stern face, he showed neither the distraction of some, nor the recollection of others. He was calm, grave, in the attitude of a ruler of the Empire making a great act of will, and commanding everyone's submission with his gaze.

"To complete the effect that the First Consul had wished to produce, on the same day, M. de Fontanes reported in the *Moniteur* on a new book that was making a lot of noise at the moment: the *Génie du Christianisme* 132." A literary work is rarely blessed with such a stage setting.

In fact, there was a providential connection between the two works: at a time when hatred against religion was still muted, the Concordat was a courageous act in politics, and the *Génie du Christianisme*, no less courageous in literature.

Napoleon's Concordat has also been compared to the famous Edict of Milan, by which Constantine put an end to the regime of persecution and gave peace to the Church. Here, the comparison is less fortunate than with the *Génie du Christianisme*. Indeed:

In even more difficult circumstances, with more formidable opposition, Constantine was both more courageous and more just than Bonaparte. Instead of enshrining spoliation, the first Christian emperor restored to the Church all its confiscated assets, and at the same time guaranteed it the fullest and most complete freedom. The Concordat, on the other hand, sanctioned the confiscation of ecclesiastical property and established the principle of restricting the freedom of the Church. With Constantine, it was Christianity that came to life, to flourish, in a new society that its virtue brought out of the old pagan world; with Bonaparte, it was the Church obliged to accept a compromise in order to live in the midst of the world, troubled rather than new, of the Revolution.

The difference between the edict of 313 and the treaty of 1801 is therefore great. Nevertheless, the Concordat accepted by the Holy See enabled the Church to live, to defend itself, to perpetuate itself, and the Church has always been grateful for this.

Alas, why should Bonaparte's sincerity, which burst forth with the hallelujah of Easter Day, last only until Sunday in albis, the day when the new catechumens put on their white habit? Where are you leading Bonaparte? Nothing less than to take the means to make the Church a vassal. In the plan, still in its infancy, of a universal empire, religion would have a place of honor: but not the first, nor equal to that of the Emperor, nor even independent. Napoleon had no intention of diminishing the splendor of the kingdom of God, still less of suppressing it, but he did intend to enclose it within the splendor of his own Empire. Let the Church be great," he thought, "but not above me, nor even beside me! A vassal Church, that was the dream, the plan. As a result, almost the day after Easter, Napoleon's helping hand was supplanted by the despot.

To the bold enterprise of vassalage refer these rapid steps down the road of impiety and outrage:

Attempts to falsify the articles of the Concordat;

The surreptitious addition of organic articles;

The Emperor's tyranny in demanding that the Papacy have the same friends and enemies as France;

His quarrels with Pius VII, a veritable eagle against dove;

Finally, the Pope's abduction by Colonel Radet of the Gendarmerie, his internment in Savona, then in Fontainebleau. But before leaving the Quirinal, the outraged dove had appealed to Almighty God

against the kidnapping eagle, and excommunication had fallen on the forehead that had received the coronation.

What a contrast with the beautiful Easter Sunday when the Concordat was promulgated!

Subsequent consequences:

Whereas the faults of sovereigns do not remain solitary, and peoples drink from them as from a family cup, France and the nations will unlearn respect for the Pope and for religion. Through the organic articles, the clergy will become, willy-nilly, part of the state functionary and will no longer have the same independence. By insulting the Sovereign Pontiff, people were taught to forget that he was the representative of Christ, and to consider him only as a king's reed to be bent. The entry of a colonel of the gendarmerie into the Pope's apartments has opened the breach to all forms of brigandage against the Papacy. The faith of the people has been profoundly affected, and religious disorganization, albeit slow in its course, where a simulacrum of organization will be reflected for a long time, seems irremediable, unless God intervenes.

III

Another disorganization, but this one carried out at full speed, was to be called: barriers torn down, cities sacked, peoples crushed, kingdoms amalgamated.

By a kind of irony, which we have already mentioned as being familiar to the Revolution, which loves contrasts, this violent disorganization was linked to the most noble and vast project of organization that had been conceived for a very long time: Napoleon wanted to redo, in the midst of the peoples of the Latin race, the work of Charlemagne.

The Emperor himself later set out his noble ambition and dream on St. Helena.

"One of my greatest thoughts had been the agglomeration, the concentration of the same geographical peoples, dissolved and fragmented by revolutions and politics. In Europe, there are more than thirty million French, fifteen million Spaniards, fifteen million Italians and thirty million Germans, albeit scattered. I would have liked to make these diverse peoples into a single nation. With such an entourage, it would have been beautiful to step forward into posterity and the blessing of the centuries! I felt worthy of this glory¹³³.

When, as a powerful organizer, he undertook this work of concentration, he did not hesitate to say who he was.

He wrote to Cardinal Fesch, his negotiator in Rome: "Tell them that I am Charlemagne, their Emperor, and that I must be treated in the same way.

He often repeated these words: The great system that Providence has destined Us to found... The memory of Charlemagne pursued him. To the ears of their emperor galloping past their battlefield, the soldiers of Austerlitz and Jena would call the Emperor of the West.

It's only fair to include the struggle against England in the new Charlemagne's legitimate and liberating exodus. England had always been the soul and nexus of league and discord on the continent. Napoleon looked the adversary of all public felicity in the face, and an immense duel became his *idée fixe*. The gigantic struggle lasted twelve years: a struggle on the Emperor's behalf. If France has much to reproach him for, there's one thing it must never forget: he pitted himself like a giant against Great Britain, and with his nervous arms and lion's muscles, he wanted to nail her to her island, to ensure that his beloved France would take first place alongside his own glory.

To this end, as long as he kept to the path of reason or the chivalric ideal, he took bold means, perhaps, but loyal ones. He signified his desire to make the Mediterranean a French lake, he claimed Egypt, he thought of colonizing the fertile valley of the Nile. England is threatened in India. So far, so good.

But what determines and leads to deviation? What produces the deviation, both in the rebuilding of Charlemagne's empire and in the fight against England? Always the unfortunate revolutionary impulse;

and the deviation is such that not only honor and morality, but simple justice and sound politics are lacerated and trampled underfoot.

Deviation in Charlemagne's work:

In its place, Babylonian lust appears. It's a famous covetousness! "Nabu- chodonosor, king of the Assyrians, having defeated his powerful neighbor, the king of the Medes, in a great battle, felt his heart rise within him. So he summoned his advisors and generals and held in his palace what Scripture so aptly calls the mystery of his council: *habuit cum eis mysterium consilii sui*. – What was the mystery of this council? He told them that his plan was to subjugate the whole earth to his empire¹. Never, perhaps, since the Babylonian cabinet, has such a desire reappeared more bitter, more unbridled than in the brain of the crowned soldier of the Revolution, at the height of his pride. A fixed idea took hold of him, that of laying down the law in Europe and imposing his dynasty 134 135 on it; and he believed he could achieve this (in his own words) only by astonishing the world and pushing back the limits of glory for the French. M. de Metternich wrote of him to the Emperor of Austria, his master: "The aspiration to universal domination is in its very nature; it can be modified, contained; but it can never be stifled. – My appreciation of the substance of Napoleon's projects and plans has never varied. This monstrous goal, which consists in the enslavement of the continent under the domination of one man, has been, is still his¹." Monstrous goal! the word is right. What's the point of being the greatest man of war, if you're only a great man of prey? Charlemagne's reworked work is no more than a mournful plagiarism.

Deviation, inevitably, from the fight against England: the result is the continental blockade. "He closed all the ports of his empire to the English: this led him to close all the ports of the continent to them, to institute a European crusade against them, to put up with neutral sovereigns like the Pope, lukewarm subalterns like his brother Louis, dubious or inadequate collaborators like the Bragances of Portugal and the Bourbons of Spain, and thus to seize Portugal and Spain, the Papal States and Holland, then the Hanseatic cities and the Duchy of Oldenburg, to

the imperial family council, to elect his successor. He said, and later especially repeated, that he felt isolated in Europe, which was true, for he had reduced all the courts to secretly conspiring against him. Hence his resolution to give thrones to his brothers, in order to create points of support and centers of correspondence for the great Empire (Dareste, *Histoire de France*, t. VIII.).

¹ M. de Metternich, II, 378, 403.

to lengthen its cordon of military commanders, prefects and customs officers along the entire coastline, from the mouths of Cattaro and Trieste to Hamburg and Danzig, a kind of lace that is tightened more and more every day, until it strangles not only the consumer, but also the producer and the merchant at home¹".

And so it goes,

Its goal: universal dictatorship ² ;

Its pretext: the ruin of England³;

Its means: to subjugate the continent and unite it against England⁴;

These were the broad outlines of his policy, but with blood-red lines. It was to organize V Empire for eternal war³,

¹ Taine, *le Régime moderne*, p. 102-103: "He resolved to encircle the whole of Europe with a coastline all his own, from Holland to the Ionian Islands, from which would be excluded England, which would then starve for lack of outlets for its manufactures and the products of its colonies.

"A decree from Berlin, followed by an even more terrible one from Milan, declared any Englishman found in the occupied countries to be a prisoner of war, and all ships, goods and stores belonging to British subjects to be taken. Orders were given to repel all vessels coming from English ports: a gigantic puerility, which dealt a fatal blow to a host of interests, and turned the war against peoples, who are

harder to defeat than kings. From there, looting, confiscations and organized espionage throughout Europe, the violation of stores and correspondence, the ruin of trading towns and the need for a despotism to which the Terror regime had not been reduced." (Cantu, t. XVIII.)

2 "I wanted to be a crowned Washington; but I could only reasonably achieve this through universal dictatorship; I claimed it." (Memorial, November 30, 1815.)

3 "I want to rule the sea as well as the land, and dispose of the East as well as the West.... In short, with my France, England must naturally end up being no more than an appendix: nature has made her one of our islands, like that of Oleron or Corsica... (Mémorial, Napoleon's words, March 24, 1816)

4 He announced that "English resistance will force him to conquer Europe." (Thiers, IV, 249.)

5 Cantu.

And so began, in space as well as in time, a struggle that began to be organized, in which the barriers of peoples were torn down, natural limits were scorned, neutral territories were violated, the law of nations was trampled underfoot, monarchs were deposed, dynasties were entrenched, small states were suppressed, great kingdoms were dislocated, nationalities were torn to pieces: a jumble of everything, peoples, borders, religions, languages and customs. Europe, like a pale man after a great loss of blood, changed face and began to falter. The crisis of the nations had begun. Among the atrocious battlefields, one in Leipzig was given a significant name: the Battle of the Nations,

The Middle Ages had a bizarre tradition: the Dance of the Dead;

It was a grand ball presided over by Death, and attended by all conditions and ages of human life. Death would say to the Pope: "It's up to you to open the dance; the tiara cannot exempt you from this step". - She would say to Y Empress: "Your courtiers have fled, no one approaches to offer you their hand, accept mine, and let's dance together."-She would say to Y Hermit: "Good hermit, where are you going so late out of your cell with lantern in hand? You'll go no further, I'm putting out your light!" -She said to the Young Man: "Halt there, my boy! Where are you going so fast? Laughing, singing, dancing, wooing the beautiful. Stop!" And so with other ages and states.

Wouldn't it be true to describe, in the midst of modern times, a dance of the dead for the Nations? It would be enough to line up, for this funeral ball, the rulings and blows of the terrible Emperor against nationalities and dynasties, blows and rulings such as these:

Regarding the Republic of Genoa, he wrote: "I only gathered Genoa to have sailors. The only answer to its discontent is: sailors! sailors!"

He announces himself to Venice: "I'll be another Attila for Venice!" and the Queen of the Adriatic is stripped and ruined forever.

He decreed: "The Bourbons of Naples have ceased to reign!"

The same funeral decrees reached the House of Hesse and the House of Braganza.

11 said to a deputation of Portuguese: "I don't yet know what I shall do with you, that will depend on events.

He dethrones the Spanish royal family and says to the Spanish people: "Your monarchy is old, my mission is to rejuvenate it." Spain rises up, and Lannes sent to reduce it is forced to write: "It's a war that horrifies.

Like Death, who is implacable, Napoleon never backs down. Pursuing his goal to the limit, he would rather lose everything than give up anything.

In truth, Napoleon's gigantic epic is the opening of the dance of the dead for the nations, a macabre dance: tricolored standards fluttering in the winds of battle, mamelukes, cuirassiers, carabinieri, lancers, artillerymen, fierce grenadiers, heroic infantrymen, passing through the red fusillades, while sabers sounded on helmets and, through the smoke of gunpowder, the names of Arcole, Lena, Austerlitz, Moskowa shone like lightning! From 1795 to 1815, Europe had its Ball of Death. The Revolution,

which inspired the dance, took care to maintain it...

Religious disorganization was joined by political disorganization.

IV

Another, perhaps more profound because it is social, is about to be inaugurated: the disorganization associated with Napoleon's Gode.

It, too, began with the appearance of organization and salvation. In the shadow of the Gode Napoléon, society will sit between a terebinth and a man- cenillier.

At first glance, this code looks like a terebinth, that beautiful tree of the East which extends its hospitable branches on all sides and from which the Bible borrows the symbol of honor and fecundity; like the terebinth, my branches are branches of honor and grace 136! Napoleon's Gode, in effect, achieved for France the unity of legislation prepared and desired for centuries, and presented itself as a masterpiece of justice and simplicity. What's more, the family and property, shattered by the Convention, were largely restored to life; and civil equality remained enshrined as the distinctive character of the new society. Other nations envied France, say historians and dictionaries¹.

Bonaparte played a double personal role in this work, firstly through his powerful will, which hastened its completion, and secondly through his presence at a number of discussions in which he took part, and in which he gave his decisions with his promptness of conception, his surprising penetration, and his always original word 137 138.

This is the aspect of the terebinth in this famous code; but here, on the other hand, is that of the mancenilla :

The family is going to be pissed off by divorce;

Napoleon was cruel to women, and admitted divorce against them; he said that the mayor always pronounced in too low a voice these words of the law: The wife must obey the husband, and he would have liked to accompany them with more solemn forms. His aim was to introduce into the family the same discipline as in the army, summing up everything, there as elsewhere, in one word: Obedience. Isn't divorce itself disobedience to the Gospel? The family has been struck to the heart.

Its members and home will also be affected by the law of succession;

The Code forbids the right to keep property;

Consequences:

The liquidation of inheritances resulting from the forced division of estates will inevitably destroy smallholdings and small workshops; the old races of peasants will disappear from the soil; city workers will be condemned to all the moral and physical miseries of nomadic life. In the upper classes too, the cult and education of the home, the spirit of tradition and respect, will disappear, leaving an immense void in the bleached aspect of French society.

In addition, the regime of forced partition will produce sterility in marriages, the number of births will be loosely limited, and statistics will record the increasing march of depopulation with each quinquennial census.

In tin, the regime of forced partition will upset and overturn the institutions that best expressed order and freedom, dissolving corporations and compromising all religious foundations.

Under these aspects of the law of succession and divorce, Napoleon's Gode is bad: it's the mancenillier. It had to be so for Pius VII, who returned to his homeland in 1814, to post a proclamation in Rome reading: "The Civil Code is abolished forever!

The great nations of Europe, reverting to their first sentiment, will reject it and defend themselves against it, as one defends oneself against poisoned air.

V

Disorganized in religion, in politics, in the family home, in the transmission of goods, France, and with

it Europe, will go through, in addition, the saddest phase of alteration: the moral disorganization of the human person.

This disorganization, like the previous ones, has a starting point that promised better: the love of glory. The love of glory, confined within the bounds of wisdom and moderation, is nothing but honest and legitimate,

and even religion confesses and consecrates it. It is the passion of beautiful souls, who esteem their fellow men enough to aspire to merit their attention and suffrage through the brilliance of their talents or virtues.

Under Napoleon, the human person is covered in glory.

The French Revolution had conferred on man the civil right to achieve: Napoleon taught him how to use it and make his own way. "An extraordinary new force has just entered history: a spiritual force, similar to that which once stirred souls in Spain in the 16th century, in Europe at the time of the Crusades, in Arabia under Mohammed. It overexcites the faculties, it increases energies tenfold, it transports man beyond or beside himself, it makes enthusiasts and heroes, blind and insane, consequently conquerors, irresistible dominators; it marks its imprint and engraves its memorial in ineffaceable characters on men and things, from Cadiz to Moscow. All natural barriers are overturned, all ordinary limits are surpassed. French soldiers," wrote a Prussian officer after Lena, "are small, puny; one of our Germans would beat four of them. But under fire, they become supernatural beings: they are carried away by an inexpressible ardor, of which we see no trace in our soldiersi...

What was this new, extraordinary force that increased French energy tenfold? It was the passion to achieve, awakened in 1789, which became, with Napoleon, the passion for glory. In the footsteps of such a leader, it gave birth, as the Prussian officer put it, to supernatural beings. They are famous, moreover, the words Bonaparte had the secret to enthrall, to carry away;

To the retreating troops on the Pont d'Arcole:

Forward! Follow your general!

k a wounded grenadier who feared soiling a beautiful saddle embroidered with the general-in-chief:

Go, there's nothing too good for a brave man!

To the Marengo army:

Soldiers, remember that my habit is to sleep on the battlefield.

* Taine, *le Régime moderne*, t. I, p. 345-346.

La Prépondérance juive, II. 13

On seeing the sun rise without clouds on the morning of the Battle of Moskowa:

It was the sun of Austerlitz.

To General Moreau, presenting him with a pair of richly ornamented pistols:

I wanted to have the names of all your victories engraved on them, but there wasn't enough room to contain them.

To a grenadier surprised by sleep and whose guard he was keeping:

After so much fatigue, it's quite permissible for a brave man like you to fall asleep.

But it wasn't just in the camps that human beings grew up, they were consumed with the ambition to rise, in all conditions. In those days," reports a contemporary, "a boy pharmacist, among his drugs and jars, in a back store, told himself as he p ant and filtered that, if he made some great discovery, he would be made a count with 50,000 pounds of income. In those days, the supernumerary clerk who inscribed names on parchment with his fine, molded handwriting could imagine that one day his own name would fill a senator's or minister's patent. In those days, the young corporal who receives his first stripes hears in his imagination the drum rolls, trumpet blasts and artillery salvos that will proclaim him Marshal of the Empire*."

It's only fair, then, to recognize that the persona

1 Taine, *le Régime moderne*, t. I, p. 345–346. is swept up in a beautiful movement following Napoleon. But then, what is the cause of this rapid decline, turning into a fall and ending in moral breakdown? Always the disastrous excess of revolution, complicated, in this case, by the inadequacy of human forces left to their own devices.

Excess was Napoleon's misfortune. The Emperor had said: "I will push back the limits of glory for the French. He pushed them back so far that the human person was lost with his moral feelings, just as the great army, with all its crews, was lost in the steppes of Russia.

And then, in addition to the excess, isn't there the insufficiency of human forces, which had to be taken into account? Poor human nature has its limits, and Napoleon didn't think of them when he wanted to push back those of glory. With the Crusades, the surge of human strength had lasted two centuries; with Napoleon and the Empire, it lasted twenty.

Under the dual influence of this excess and inadequacy, the moral disorganization that follows rapidly developed:

On Napoleon's side, his ambition was guilty of a real crime: he constantly treated the human person as a means, making a mockery of man. This process is forbidden, O Caesar! Only things deprived of intelligence may be used as means, but it is not permitted to include the person. There's an axiom in morality that says: Respect personality as an end, and never use it as a means. The tough Emperor has always tried to ignore this. Everything that constitutes man in soul or body became a means to serve his ambition, and was treated as such:

Like a means, that sacred fire called enthusiasm. – Napoleon didn't outlaw it, but he wanted so much to direct it, that he suppressed all the great efforts of the soul in favor of just one: that which makes one die well with arms in hand;

As a means, whoever approached him. – We became an instrument of his reign: "This terrible man has subjugated us all; he holds all our imaginations in his hand, which is sometimes of steel, sometimes of velvet; but we don't know which will be the hand of the day, and there's no escaping it: it never lets go of what it has once seized1 ".

Gomme des moyens, his confidants and servants. – We appeared to ourselves, doing only what we were ordered to do, as veritable machines, much the same as, or less than, the elegant, gilded armchairs that had just adorned the palaces of the Tuileries and Saint-Cloud.2 ".

Gumming up the vices and passions of poor humanity. – He carefully cultivated in people all the shameful passions..., he liked to see the weak sides in order to seize them. Where he saw no vices, he encouraged weakness, and, for want of a better word, aroused fear, so as to find himself always and constantly the strongest.... He looked upon

1 Mollien, *Mémoires*, vol. III, 427.

2 Mme de Rémusat, *Mémoires*, II, 32, 29.

men as vile currency or as instruments 1;"

As a means, the thought of others. – What he fears most is that, near or far from him, one brings or retains only the ability to judge. His thought is a marble rut from which no mind should stray139 140;"

As a means, human existence. – I don't care," he replies on learning of the death of a devoted servant, "he was good for nothing. Soldiers, I need your life and you owe it to me 141 142 ;

As a means, death. – Four hundred wounded were hampering his march between Jaffa and Carmel; Bonaparte had them given opium. Desgenettes, chief physician of the Egyptian army, was consulted on this terrible question of opium, and replied that he gave treatment to heal, not to kill^. At the other end of his reign, when all the veterans had perished, Napoleon, having only recruits left, made up for it with immense equipment; three hundred thousand men dragged fourteen hundred cannons after them: these

mouths to fire, to which he gave prodigious mobility, devoured in battle an enormous mass of what he called "cannon fodder" ¹⁴³.

This is what Napoleon did with the human person. It was the heap of clay awaiting the potter's hand. "If there are any hard parts in the heap, the potter has only to crush them; it will always be enough for him to knead firmly ¹⁴⁴. Scripture, comparing God to a potter, says that, in the clay from which he made man, he breathed the soul; the potter of the Revolution removed it.

Under the mantle of glory that Napoleon threw over his shoulders, the human person was diminished. It has to be said, however, that it lent itself to this.

Indeed, in principle, at the beginning of the Declaration of Rights, there was an ideal in this thought: to make one's own way. But under the Empire, from 1808 onwards, the ideal gradually disappeared, and from then on, what would form the basis of characters in France and elsewhere was the passion to achieve, to enjoy. "It's all about moving forward quickly, and by any means, beautiful or ugly. On this slope, one slides fast and low; everyone thinks of himself first; the individual becomes the center. And so, the example is set from above. Was Napoleon working for France or for himself? The conquest of Spain, the Russian expedition, the installation of his brothers and relatives on new thrones, the continual dismemberment and reshuffling of Europe, all these incessant and increasingly distant wars – is it for the public good and common salvation that he accumulates them? What does he want too, if not to push his fortune ever further?

"He's too ambitious", say his soldiers themselves.

yet they follow him to the end. "We've always marched with him", replied the old grenadiers as they crossed Poland into Russia; "we couldn't abandon him this time, let him go it alone". But others, who saw him up close, the first after him, did like him, and, however high they had climbed, they wanted to climb even higher, at the very least to provide for themselves, to hold something solid in their hands. Masséna amassed 40 million, and Talleyrand 60: in the event of political collapse, the money remains. Soult tried to get himself elected King of Portugal, and Bernadette found a way to get herself elected King of Sweden.

Marshal Marmont's words are well known: "As long as he said: 'Everything for France', I served him enthusiastically. When he said: France and me, I served him with zeal. When he said: Me and France, I served with devotion. Only when he said: Me without France, did I detach myself from him.

"In short, Napoleon introduced into the new society, as a central driving force, as a universal spring, the need to succeed, unbridled emulation, unscrupulous ambition, raw egoism, first and foremost his own egoism: is it any wonder that this spring, stretched to the limit, disrupted, then demolished his machine.

"After him, under his successors, the same mechanism will work in the same way, only to break in the same way, after a more or less long period ¹⁴⁵.

VI

It was St. Helena.

In one of those delirious moods that brought before him hopes illuminated by memories, Napoleon exclaimed: "The great and beautiful truths of the French Revolution will last forever, so interwoven have we been with lustre, monuments and prodigies! We have washed away the first stains in streams of glory. They will be immortal. Having emerged from the tribune, cemented with the blood of battles, decorated with the laurels of victory, saluted by the acclamations of the peoples, sanctioned by treaties, they can no longer retrograde. They live in Great Britain, they light up America, they are nationalized in France. This is the tripod from which the light of the world will gush forth.

A lying tripod! Would Napoleon not have struck it with his heel, and broken it, if, in its gushing light, he had seen in the future, as a result of these battles, these laurels, these truths, these treaties, these streams of glory: what then? Jewish preponderance.

Let us pass a second time through the brilliant ruts that the chariot of glory has dug, to catch a glimpse of the sons of Israel, now citizens, ready to take advantage of the disorganization.

A. - VASSAL RELIGION

It was not in the Emperor's designs to suppress or even diminish religion, but he had the fixed idea of making it a vassal of his empire. What we have reported (page 180) is confirmed by this quotation from the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*: "If I had returned victorious from Moscow, I would have led the Pope to no longer regret the temporal, I would have made him an idol, I would have directed the religious world, as well as the political world... My councils would have been the representation of Christendom, and the pope would have been its president L".

It was to bring about this vassalage that the organic articles were perfidiously added to the Concordat and that the budget for cults, a debt owed to the Church of France, became, in the mind of the despot and his successors, a means of keeping the Clergy under the yoke, assimilated to a paid civil servant.

The Emperor passed, and the instruments of vassalage remained.

Supposing the Jews, in the course of their growing power, managed to direct these instruments of vassalage, this budget, these organic articles, even this Concordat, either occultly or through normal participation in the affairs of the country, what an addition to their credit, great God! and what a humiliation for the Church of France!

Bold Emperor, with your leopard's cunning combined with your lion's vigor, you wanted to make the Church, the Synagogue and France fall into the trap of your glory: the Church will use the trap, the Synagogue will escape, but France will be found panting and humiliated, even in holy things!

1 Memorial.

B. - THE UPHEAVAL OF FRONTIERS, THE PELE-MELE OF PEOPLES AND THEIR INTERESTS

To complete the jumble we have described (pages 186-189), let us quote a historian:

"We then saw the strangest mixtures of peoples; we saw the Cipayes fighting in Egypt; an English fleet leaving the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel to land troops at Ile-de-France; the Spaniards fighting at Dantzick, the Italians at Warsaw, the Poles at Saint-Domingue. He (the Emperor) tore nationalities apart, trampled underfoot constitutions, and turned a republic into a kingdom or a viceroyalty; he mixed plains and mountains, old and new peoples, according to his whim, without regard for religions, languages or customs; he conquered without any idea of conserving, without following skilful diplomacy and without knowing how to base the future on knowledge of the past ; He detached the Tyrol from Austria, to which he delivered Venice; he separated Rome and Florence from Italy, of which they are the heart; he put a king in republican Holland; he detached the German princes from their emperor, and pretended to make Spain bend under foreign kings. From one ruin came another ruin; his sole aim was to conquer peoples, in order to use them to conquer others¹⁴⁶".

What was the result?

The birth of cosmopolitanism; through his Babylonian lust, Napoleon is the author.

The sects had predicted it. "Princes and nations will disappear from the earth. Reason will then be the only code of mend. Is this not the avowed aim of international socialism: to overthrow all frontiers, abolish all nationalities, starting with the smallest, to create a single state, erase all notions of homeland, and make the whole earth common to all² .

The Emperor inaugurated this cosmopolitanism with his upheaval of frontiers and his jumble of peoples. But then again, wasn't he paving the way for Jewish preponderance?

Cosmopolitans since the beginning of the Christian era, the Jews, in the reflexive or unconscious tendencies of their jealousy, have never had more than one dream: that of disorganizing the Christian peoples and, unable to do so by violence, of breaking by cunning the bundle of their forces, their glories

and their interests. What secret satisfaction for these eternal travelers the day cosmopolitanism gave them fellow travelers! The jumble of the Empire began this joy of resemblance. To all those princes descending the steps of their thrones and going into exile, to all those peoples dragged and dragged along the highways and byways, the Wandering Jew could say: You have become like me!

But what a reversal, great God! if ever the Wandering-Jew, having been invited to sit in the home of the

1 Weishaupt.

2 Deschamps, *les Sociétés secrètes*, t. I, p. 257.

nations, saw their sons making their way out of their lands, their soil: an accomplice to expulsion, or simply a peaceful spectator!

G. - the crumbling of fortunes

This is one of the most unfortunate results of the Napoleonic Code: there's no need to go back over it. But, alas! by this result, does not the Code Napoléon become the most active auxiliary of Hebraic power? comparable to the treachery of a Marshal of France on a field of operations where, against the fortune of nations, Jewish fortune would advance! The Code hands over estates, châteaux, art collections and finances to the latter: all baggage will be taken.

Indeed, consider the following lines from a jurisconsult as eminent as he is impartial: "The Jew conquers the Christian; we do not have the simplicity to reproach him for this; but we ask what interest does the legislator have in putting the French citizen in the position of having to sell his real estate to the Jews who keep it?

"Our laws forbid the ability to keep property. The freedom to test is a crime that is immediately punished by the courts.

"The Jews have it easy. They are thrifty. They know that Christians, because of our Civil Code, periodically suffer a financial crisis when it comes to inheritance. They're on the lookout, showing up with the stock market in hand. Christians find it easy to dip into their pockets. 11 has no pretension of keeping a house that would be too heavy for an heir, and which moreover is encumbered by hypothecs and transfer duties. The house naturally passes to the Jewish lender. The house was built for him. As for the Christian who built it and embellished it at his own expense, he is left with the resource of living in it as a tenant.

"If they were ruined today, they'd start all over again tomorrow. They are only the secondary cause of their wealth. The primary cause is the Code.

The wise and clear-sighted jurisconsult, writing in 1888, was able to add:

"Today the Jews dominate in Rome by virtue of the Napoleonic Code, which has removed all fixity from material interests. Establish the Civil Code of Rome," wrote Louis-Napoléon to Edgar Ney. The Civil Code undermines, shakes and destroys all bodies and institutions founded for all time; it deprives them, by incessant liquidation of the material interests that sustain them, of all power to consolidate or develop. From day one, he opens the way for the enemy. It was through this breach, and not through the Porta Pia breach, that the enemy truly entered Rome. Under the banner of sales and purchases, trade, credit and the division of estates, sponsored by the Civil Code, the Revolution took possession of Rome. There, as in France in 1789, the French handed society over to the Jews. The Jews reign in Rome, and it's not their fault; Christians of a particular kind absolutely wanted it that way.

"The Civil Code is the dynamite that blows up all institutions 1.

i Coquille, *les Juifs* (article in *V Univers*, April 14, 1888).

Any comment would weaken this painful quotation.

D. - THE PASSION TO ACHIEVE

Beautiful of ideal with the opening of the century, it became, towards the end of the Empire, restless,

egoistic, coarse: its horizon, which was above all the acquisition of glory, became much darker.

Let's let a few years pass, the century move forward... here's 1840... then 1860... What has become of the passion to achieve? Is its goal still glory?

A little... in Africa...; the conquest of Algeria.

Is his goal at least honor?

Quite a bit, but to tell the truth, honors more than honor.

Is it pleasure?

Oh, unbridled and universal. The passion to achieve in order to enjoy, the shipwreck of all characters!

Bossuet foresaw a time "when everything would be held in indifference, except pleasures and business 1".

Wouldn't Jewish preponderance be in full bloom at that time too?

First of all, when it came to honor and honors, the Israelites would be greedy for them: what wonder, after nineteen centuries of scum! But what would come as a poignant surprise is if, when the Israelite and the Christian went down into the quarry together to compete for the prize of the race, the Israelite almost always won.

1 Sermon for the Second Sunday in Advent. the prize. Undoubtedly, his aptitudes will have been refreshed and stimulated by civil emancipation; but won't he above all have gold, which possesses the virtue of shortening, even better than steam, the distances to be covered?

Then, as far as enjoyment is concerned, won't its pursuit be preparing the way for a formidable subjection of the Christian to the Israelite? Both will be hungry for well-being and pleasure: one because he will no longer have faith, the other because he will have conquered the freedom to savor everything, to attract everything, to captivate everything. And, what's more, the latter will have the gold. The result? The harmful reproduction of the human person as a means to an end. Napoleon put this abominable theory on the agenda. But if, with him, human life was wasted, the human person was at least treated as a means to glory: whereas it is to be feared that, under an era "where everything would be held in indifference, except pleasures and business", the human person would be treated and exploited only as a means to enjoyment and flattening.

We have followed, one by one, the brilliant ruts dug by the Empire's chariot: they all lead to Jewish preponderance.

Wasn't the tripod on which the captive of St. Helena spoke of his ideas, his battles, his laurels, glimpsing the future for himself and his people, a liar?

CHAPTER IV

NAPOLÉON'S REORGANIZATION OF THE JEWISH CULT

A VAIN SIMULACRUM IN ITSELF, BUT A FATAL ONE

I. One of Napoleon's great faults was the reorganization of the Jewish cult. Historians' lightness regarding this act. Examination of the Emperor's fault. – II. The punishment of the Jews foretold by their prophets was to be this: religious, civil and political disorganization. Napoleon, continuator of the Revolution, undertakes a reorganization. The gravity of such a measure. Within what limits will Providence keep it circumscribed? The imperial reorganization of the Jewish faith. – III. What the rabbis were no longer, and what they are becoming. Their power, usurped by the disasters of the Jewish nation and shaken at the end of the XVth century, was unfortunately reestablished, and more solidly than ever, by Napoleon. – IV. The Grand Sanhedrin's bold attempt to regulate rabbis' salaries. Napoleon stands in its way, but it will triumph with Louis-Philippe. – V. The collapse of the Talmudic Synagogue delayed for a long time. The insanity of the doctrine of common law for all religions is clearly demonstrated here. "From bellows to bellows, all the way to the throne of the world.

In the midst of the fracas of the nations during the years of the Empire, a small event took place which, like everything that begins and ends, passed almost unnoticed, but which was to have far-reaching consequences.

This small event was the reorganization of the Jewish cult. .

Let's go back in time to the year of the Sanhedrin, 1807.

In his instructions to his commissioners at the Grand Sanhedrin, Napoleon had said: "I wish to take all possible steps to ensure that the rights restored to the Jewish people are not illusory, and to help them find Jerusalem in France¹⁴⁷".

A generous but imprudent desire! The active and skilful sons of Israel were only too happy to comply, and not only find Jerusalem in France, but melt France into Jerusalem.

April saw the end of the Israelite Assemblies in Paris. Almost an entire year passed without any measures being adopted, either for or against. Napoleon reflected.

In the year. 1808, on the same day (March 17), three decrees on the subject of the Jews appeared in the Bulletin des Lois. The third of these dealt with the civil and political status of the Jews, and was to arouse violent anger, even leading to a rupture between Napoleon and his protégés. We examine them below, in Book III.

The first two had an exclusively religious purpose: they organized the exercise of Israelite worship in France.

French historians have been excessively light-hearted with regard to these first two decrees. They considered the organization of Hebrew worship to be of secondary importance, and paid no attention to it. In fact, everyone in France imitated their carelessness. We shall pay dearly for this carelessness.

The dis of Israel, on the other hand, understood the full importance of this organization, and when it was first discussed before the Sanhedrin, after the reading of the Emperor's project which provided the broad outlines and details, the rapporteur pronounced these words, the gravity of which he himself did not suspect: "The Mosaic cult is emerging for the first time, if we may use this expression, from the kind of incognito where it has been for two thousand years î.

Strange expression!

What was this incognito?

II

Most of the prophets in Israel had predicted a total disorganization of the Jewish people as punishment for a great crime; and because its form of government was theocratic, i.e. essentially religious right down to its civil and political constitution, the disorganization, by focusing more particularly on worship, would reach Jewish life in its last ramifications. The decree of disorganization

1 Collection des actes de l'assemblée des Israélites, convened in Paris in 1806, p. 276.

formulated by the prophet Hosea, who had summed up the threats of the prophets before him, contained a rigor of ternias that resembled so many scalpel incisions: For many days, the children of Israel will be without king, without prince, without sacrifice, without altar, without èphod and without teraphim¹⁴⁸.

Total disorganization realized:

Without king: with the royal tribe of Judah lost in the jumble of exile, and with the family of David extinct, kingship has been annihilated;

Without a prince: no Judge, no Magistrate, no Gideon, no Machabee, arose among them;

Without sacrifice: the Paschal lamb has not been sacrificed once, and the priestly tribe of Levi is nowhere to be found;

No altar: of the destroyed Temple of Jerusalem, stone upon stone remains; it could not be rebuilt; it was forbidden to have an altar elsewhere;

Without an ephod: the sacred garment of the High Priest, the ephod was the conventional sign of God's communication with his people; its rejection became the announcement that God would no longer communicate with them; in fact, no prophet spoke to them, no miracle-worker performed miracles; Without theraphim; theraphim were to the Jews what the larian gods were to the pagans; their disappearance would mark the instability of homes in Israel: indeed, peace and fixity were no longer theirs to share.

Total disorganization is therefore visible and palpable, particularly in terms of worship. The Jewish doctors, however, never wanted to acknowledge the punishment. In the impossibility of reorganizing the cult, they have, if not explained, at least palliated the punishment of disorganization with the prodigy of preservation: "Scattered, Providence preserves us; one day, we will reorganize ourselves...". With this explanation, let's return to the singular expression uttered at the S'anhedrin.

The insurmountable impossibility of reorganizing their lightning-stricken cult was what the rapporteur decorated with the pretty name of "incognito": the Mosaic cult is about to emerge for the first time from the incognito where it has been for two thousand years. Until now, we knew that this mysterious veil, the incognito, could well suit Providence: chance is the incognito of Providence; but we were completely unaware that the veil also enveloped the Jewish cult...

Now the Sanhedrin was solemnly announcing that the Emperor was going to remove the veil and put an end to the incognito.

It was serious, very serious.

The seriousness, no doubt, would be circumscribed. It would not go so far as to contradict the prophecy of the Chastisement: God's words are not binding. The Emperor will restore to the Jewish cult an outward lustre, a pomp, and thus an appearance of life; but the imperial ordinance will not restore to them the altar of sacrifice, nor the Paschal lamb, nor the Levitical tribe. Moreover, Caesar had no thought of this. He never bothered about the role and classification of the Jewish sacrifices, the sacrifice whose blood was carried inside the tabernacle, the scapegoat, the red cow, the sacrifice for lepers. In bringing the Jewish cult out of the unpopularity and isolation in which it had remained, he had only a general, or rather revolutionary, motive in mind. Jewish soldiers in line! And a place in the sun for their synagogues!

Nevertheless, the reorganization of Jewish worship, although limited to the external and purely civil, was a great mistake. In the eyes of the Catholic Church, and for the salvation of the people, it's already too much. What's more, this cult was ruined from top to bottom by the appearance and death of the divine Lawgiver of the Christians, and a thoughtless Caesar comes and says to it: "Move forward on the same line as the Christian religion! It was a contempt for the past, and a danger for the future. If the Jews were formidable during the Middle Ages, when they were totally disorganized, what will they not become now that the State is giving them back a civil and religious life? Here's an overview of the imperial organization of Jewish worship:

DECREE OF MARCH 17 1808

Article 1. - A Synagogue and an Israelite Consistory will be established in each department containing two thousand individuals professing the religion of Moses.

Art. II - In the event that there are not two thousand Israelites in a single département, the Consistory Synagogue will encompass as many départements, from one to the next, as it takes to bring them together. The seat of the Synagogue will always be in the town with the largest Israelite population.

Art. VII. - The Consistory shall be presided over by the eldest of its members, who shall take the name (Y elder of the Consistory).

Art. XII. - The functions of the Consistory shall be: to maintain order within the synagogues, to supervise the administration of the individual synagogues, to regulate the collection and use of sums

intended for the expenses of Mosaic worship; – to encourage, by all possible means, the Israelites of the consistory district to exercise useful professions, and to make known to the authorities those who do not have avowed means of existence; – to inform the authorities each year of the number of Israelite conscripts in the district.

Art. XIII. – There will be a Central Consistory in Paris.

Art. XVII. – The functions of the Central Consistory shall be: to correspond with the Consistories; to oversee in all its parts the execution of the present regulations; to refer to the competent authority all infringements of the execution of the said regulations, either through infraction or non-observance; to confirm the appointment of rabbis.

Signed: NAPOLEON.

For the Emperor:

The Minister, Secretary of State,

Signed: Hugues B. Maret.

And so, in keeping with the song of hope sung at the Sanhedrin, the Jewish cult officially emerged from the "incognito" in which it had been draped for almost two thousand years!

At the bottom of the decree is the name of a Caesar.

Another Caesar, Constantine, brought the Catholic cult out of the darkness of the catacombs. The modern-day Caesar rescues his protégé from the rubble of lightning and the darkness of the ghetto. He commands him to take on a physiognomy, the one conferred on him by decree.

No bishop raised the alarm, no one ventured the slightest remark.

the slightest remark. Abbé Maury and Mgr de la Fare¹⁴⁹ had been in the breach to oppose the entry of Jews into civil society in 1791; no one was there to oppose the entry of their religion into the prerogatives previously enjoyed only by the Christian faith.

France's past was dead!

When the Jews resurrected, they wrapped it in their shroud.

From Napoleon's edict granting them the right to build synagogues on the entire surface of French soil, to Charles VI's edict (going back in time) ordering them to empty the kingdom, what a distance!

Everything is logical in the work of the Revolution towards them:

In 1791, the decree of the Constituante said to them: Live; in 1808, the decree of the Emperor said to them: Live as Jews.

In truth, Hosea's prophecy, which cannot be contradicted or attacked head-on, is in a way turned on its head. Without doubt, the Jews no longer have a prince; but the Emperor, the State, has become their prince. Undoubtedly, they no longer have a temple or an altar; but, by law, they officially have synagogues and consistories. What do they need theraphims or larian gods, since, in Napoleon's own words, they find Jerusalem in France? And if they no longer have prophets, they all take it upon themselves to be prophets, announcing that in 'a hundred years, fifty years or less, Israel will be on its way to becoming master of the world!

III

The harmful reorganization undertaken by the Emperor has a feature that requires a special emphasis: it is the return to life and the extra power it gives, one would think? to the rabbis.

As individuals, rabbis are extremely respectable: patriarchal fathers, peacekeepers among their brothers, and sometimes distinguished scholars in the physiological and medical sciences. But their institution is unfortunate insofar as it is detrimental to divine truth.

Let us explain the reason for this antipathy, which only affects their title, and which has been increased by the measures taken in their favor by Napoleon. It would be Israel's salvation, if it were thoroughly studied and shared!

Rabbis are by no means priests, not even doctors of the Law¹. Their authority is a result of Israel's misfortunes. When all was down among this people, the Priesthood, the Magistracy, the School; when all was dispersed: the instinct of self-preservation, then confusion and habit, concentrated in the hands of the rabbis the power of the Law.

1 Complementing the prophet Hosea, the prophet Azariah had announced: There will be a long time during which Israel will be without a true God, without priests, without teachers and without Law. (II* Book of Paralip., xv, 3.) of a single man, who was however neither priest, nor judge, nor doctor, the debris of this triple power; it was in this way that the rabbi arose, designated moreover to the choice of his co-religionists by his knowledge and personal qualities. But then, in the ghetto, in the interior of the Jewish communities, what always happens when all the powers are combined in one: the rabbinical authority was exaggerated, and sometimes ridiculed. One is stunned when one reads what the rabbis said about themselves and their authority: "Learn, my son, learn to pay more attention to the words of the sages than to the words of the Law¹. More serious is the sin against the words of the wise than against the words of the Law^{150 151}." And the inhabitants of the ghetto were careful not to contradict them. Everything our rabbis have taught in their homilies," wrote one of them, "must be accepted as equal to the Law of Moses. And if it happens that what they say seems either hyperbolic, or unnatural, or above our intelligence, we must impute it not to their words, but to the heaviness and poverty of our spirit¹⁵²." After this, it's not surprising that Basnage, who has studied the subject in depth, should have said: "The rabbis forget nothing to assert their authority. They maintain that one cannot violate their laws without exposing oneself to death. They allege examples that are frightening ¹⁵³."

This is how the exorbitant power of the rabbi came to be, even though he is neither priest, judge nor doctor¹. One of their less timid flock mocks them finely, in the Archives israélites: "The rabbinate is a bastard creation of modern times; the priesthood died at the hands of the sons of Aaron; rabbinism and priesthood are far from synonymous; I could take you step by step, through the historical paths, through the successive transformations of the rabbinic chrysalis, which is only clothed in silk at the last period of its existence".

It's true, the silk came to them from Napoleon.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

So they weren't priests. What's more, towards the end of the last century, their authority, shaped by the misfortunes of the Jewish nation and hitherto unchallenged in the synagogues, had undergone an unexpected shake-up, almost a decline. The breath of rationalism in Germany, the storm of the Revolution in France, had produced it. Mendelssohn had taught his German co-religionists to escape from a tutelage "that prevents free breathing". Beyond the Rhine, the rabbinate was "nothing but a dried-up, mummified institution" ^{154 155 156}. Zung wrote that "German and Polish rabbis were strangers to almost all human knowledge ¹⁵⁷", and Steinheim, in his Moses Mendelssohn, described "the Judaic priesthood as insolent as it was ignorant¹".

In France, the rabbinate was hardly in a better position. When the imperial commissioners at the Grand Sanhedrin asked the question: Who appoints the rabbis? What police jurisdiction do they exercise among the Jews? the assembly replied: "The qualification of rabbi is nowhere to be found in the Law of Moses... Since the French Revolution, there has been no court of rabbis in France or the Kingdom of Italy... In places where they do exist, the duties of rabbis are limited to preaching morality in temples, blessing marriages and pronouncing divorces ².

So, neither priests nor doctors of the Law, and at the end of the twentieth century, vilified in Germany and stripped of their ancient prestige in France: such were the rabbis, close to the end, for the salvation of Israel and its reconciliation with the human race!

It was at this moment, alas (and this alas should be given all the sadness of Jeremiah's lamentations), that

in the 1808 decree concerning synagogues and consistories, articles also appeared concerning rabbis: articles which saved their existence and raised their authority to an un hoped-for height, since henceforth rabbis would be considered religiously and civilly on the same line as Catholic priests. Here is the complement to the masterpiece:

1 P. 12 et seq.

2 Declaration of the Jewish deputies, sessions of August 4, 7 and 12 1806.

Art. V. – There will be one chief rabbi per consistorial synagogue.

Art. VI – The consistories will be composed of a chief rabbi, another rabbi, as far as possible, and three other Israelites, two of whom will be chosen from among the inhabitants of the town where the consistory will sit.

Art. XIII. – There shall be in Paris a Central Consistory composed of three Rabbis and two other Israelites.

Art. XIV. – The rabbis of the Central Consistory shall be chosen from among the chief rabbis.

Art. XXL – The functions of the rabbis are : 1° to teach religion; 2° the doctrine contained in the decisions of the Great Sanhedrin; 3° to remind people in all circumstances to obey the laws, in particular those relating to the defense of the homeland, but to urge them even more especially every year, at the time of conscription, from the first call of authority until the law is fully executed; 4° to make the Israelites consider military service as a sacred duty, and to declare to them that, during the time they devote to this service, the law exempts them from observances that could not be reconciled with it; 5° to preach in the synagogues, and to recite the prayers that are said there in common for the Empire and the imperial family; 6° to celebrate marriages and to declare divorces, without them being able, in any case, to proceed with them, unless the requesting parties have duly provided them with the civil act of marriage or divorce.

Art. XXII. – The salaries of rabbis who are members of the Central Consistory are set at 6,000 francs; those of chief rabbis of consistorial synagogues are set at 3,000 francs; those of rabbis of particular synagogues will be set by the meeting of Israelites who have requested the establishment of the synagogue. It may not be less than 1000 francs. The Israelites of neighboring districts may vote to increase this salary.

The rabbinic chrysalis, to use the comparison provided by the Archives israélites, was formed: the rabbis were clothed in silk by Napoleon. Let them allow us to give the picturesque figure its full development. Dressed in silk: that was only half the prince's benefaction. But when the Bulletin des Lois announced that the major cities of the Empire had been provided with rabbis, we saw an unusual metamorphosis: that of Hebrew butterflies decked out in the colors of France! This is how the rabbi of Paris, the rabbi of Lyon, the rabbi of Bordeaux, the rabbis of Nancy, Versailles and other cities came into being.

IV

There was one thing, however, that Napoleon refused to grant the rabbis, and which would become their conquest under Louis-Philippe.

The budget for cults set up under the Concordat (1801) had barely been in operation for five years. This budget was, if not the transformation, at least the compensation for the assets taken from the Church of France by the Revolution. It was a debt, established as an institution. Bishops and priests, by agreeing to be salaried by the Government, were receiving not so much emoluments for their services as an annuity from their capital, seized and managed by the State.

The rabbis meditated on taking part in this appetizing budget, which had only just been drawn up.

Hebraic flair was perhaps never more developed than on this occasion. Indeed, without having lost any of its temporal power under the Revolution, the Synagogue worked with its protectors to ensure that its

rabbis were included among the beneficiaries of the Concordat. If they succeeded, it would be a double coup, for in addition to good annuities on property that had not been lost, the rabbis would thereby obtain the supreme consecration of their recognition as Jewish priests: would they not, in fact, be on the same footing as Catholic priests in the budget for cults?

It was a bold move.

In order to succeed with Napoleon, the cunning sons of Israel took advantage of the military question. The Emperor asked the rabbis to help him train good conscripts from among their flock. The Assembly of Notables and the Sanhedrin forwarded this request to the foot of the Throne, where the advantageous appearance of the Jewish soldiers in hope would make the rabbis' salaries go down: the assembly of the israelites of the empire of france

ET DU ROYAUME d'ITALIE,

"Considering that it is the duty of all Israelites of the French Empire and the Kingdom of Italy, to shed their blood in battle for the cause of France, with the same devotion and valor that their ancestors once fought the enemy nations of the Holy City, and to seek opportunities to make themselves worthy of the benefits that a great prince deigns at this time to shower upon them ;

<(Stop:

"That Messieurs les Commissaires de Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale seront suppliés de porter aux pieds du trône l'expression de sa profonde et immortelle reconnaissance ;

"Que Messieurs les Commissaires seront également suppliés de faire connaître à Sa Majesté le vœu que formement humblement l'Assemblée, pour que Sa Majesté mette le comble à ses bienfaits, en consentant à concourir Himself au salaire des rabbins, et en daignant charger les autorités locales de l'Empire de France et du royaume d'Italie de se concerter avec les consistoires, so that, through their intervention and zeal, they can destroy any aversion that Israelite youth may have to the noble profession of arms, and thus ensure perfect obedience to the laws of conscription L".

The Emperor, we must do him justice, was outraged by this audacity; and the ambition to have conscripts did not absolve him, among the rabbis, of the ambition to contribute to the religious budget. His Majesty was at the Tilsitt camp. M. Furtado, president of the Jewish assembly, came expressly from Paris to present the request. With the stroke of a pen, the Emperor blocked the way for this audacious attempt. He ordered that the Israelites themselves should pay the salaries of their rabbis in the various consistory synagogues^{158 159}.

Unfortunately, the principle had been established, and the Jews would not be defeated. Their march is something like that of the small hand of a clock which, while appearing immobile, arrives at the same time as the large one. What's more, don't the faults of the imperial government justify their claims? They were denied the salaries of bishops and priests, and their entry into office was assimilated to that of bishops. On May 10, 1808, at the installation of the Consistoire de Paris, the three chief rabbis took this oath: "I swear and promise to God, on the Holy Bible, to maintain obedience to the constitutions of the Empire and fidelity to the Emperor. I also promise to make known anything I learn of which is contrary to the interests of the Sovereign or the State." Now, the wording of this oath was exactly the same as that taken by bishops under the Concordat: "I swear and promise to God, on the Holy Gospels, to remain faithful and obedient to the Government, and if, in my diocese or elsewhere, I learn that something is being planned to the prejudice of the State, I will make it known to the Government." As the oath from bishop to rabbi is the same, why shouldn't the salary be the same? So they thought in Israel.

This temptation will never go away. The ever-increasing weakness of Christian society, sickened by the Revolution, will only strengthen it. The guardians of the religious budget insensibly forget that in France, this budget implies a debt to the Church: they see it only as the salary of religious civil servants.

So, when the Israelites take advantage of a circumstance in which the government needs them, they will come back to attack the unfortunate budget.

ministers, in the name of equality before the law, demanded that one religion should not be left penniless when another received millions. This circumstance occurred in 1831, and Louis-Philippe, at the request of the Laffitte ministry, signed this state law, which we transcribe here in anticipation:

Louis-Philippe, King of the French, to all present and future, salut.

The Chambers have adopted, we have ordered and ordain the following:

Sole article. – As of January 1, 1831, ministers of Israelite worship will receive salaries from the public treasury.

The present law, discussed, deliberated and adopted by the Chamber of Peers and the Chamber of Deputies, and sanctioned by Us this day, will be executed as a law of the State.

Done in Paris, at the Palais-Royal, on the eighth day of February in the year 1831.

Signed: Louis-Philippe.

This signature by Louis-Philippe will be counted among the mortal blows dealt to Christian society; but the false measures taken by Napoleon in favor of the rabbis had prepared the blow.

Jewish Preponderance, II.

V

To sum up: the Jewish cult, lifted from its rubble, was reorganized in a civil manner, and the rabbis were assimilated to priests.

What were the consequences of this strange, hybrid fertilization?

Serious ones.

Firstly, the collapse of the Talmudic synagogue was delayed for a long time. Not only will the rabbis have to tear off the blindfold of error, but also their share of the budget. They will no longer be confined to the Talmud, but to the State's payroll. The man who will dislodge them from this new position will be a clever one! During Titus' siege of Jerusalem, there was a famous tower which, by delaying the capture of the city for a long time, increased the horrors of the siege: the Antonia Tower, against which the Roman legions raised eight successive causeways. The budget for religious services became the YAntonia of the rabbis! They settled there as if in a fortress. While Catholic priests may be forced to leave the budget, they will remain there.

Second consequence:

A series of affronts await the Church of God.

Ministers of war will forbid the soldiers of noble France to attend mass, even on Easter Sunday.

227 flags, at the request of the Chief Rabbi of Paris, circulars dated from the Minister's office, written in his hand, will enjoin all corps commanders to let them go to their homes to celebrate their Jewish Passover. O you who shudder at this contrast, and who have leafed through the Bible, do you remember a story that certainly interested your childhood and then moved your imagination: Ishmael's animosity against Isaac, in their childhood games.

Isaac is the son of Sara, which in the holy language means queen; Sara is queen to Abraham, king-shepherd. Ishmael, on the other hand, is the son of the arrogant servant Hagar. Stimulated by his mother's arrogance, Ishmael, playing with Isaac, mistreats him: he hates him, because Isaac is the child of the miracle and heir to the Messiah's promise. The queen complains to the patriarch, and Abraham, warned by the angel of the Lord to heed Sarah's complaints, kicks Hagar out, despite his legitimate affection for her and the pain of separation; he abandons her in the desert, taking care to place a loaf of wheat in her hand and a jug of water on her shoulder.

This is the biblical episode.

Do we now want to understand at a glance the painful situation that will befall Catholics under the eyes

of the Israelites? Let's reverse the biblical figure, let's reverse the roles of the characters:

It's the queen who will be thrown out, the Catholic Church;

It's the handmaid who will be showered with favors, the Synagogue!

Last but not least:

A formidable unknown for Christian society emerges from all these false measures.

One by one, let us go through the degrees of power to which the sons of Israel have risen:

They were always a hostile power;

They were also a financial power to be reckoned with;

They became a civil power, thanks to the rights of the citizen recognized by the Constituante;

Napoleon turned them back into a religious power, by giving life to their cult and their rabbis;

All that remains is for them to become a political power, with the treasury, legislature, army and diplomacy of the hospitable nations. They will succeed. They have been initiated into this success. The central power in religion, organized among them in 1808, will have been the prelude and model of a central power to be organized in politics; and Crémieux, in creating the Alliance israélite universelle, will do no more than transfer to politics the formidable civil and religious vitality that Napoleon has definitively restored to the Jews.

This is a good place to point out the insanity of the all-too-famous doctrine of liberalism: common law for all religions.

I'll never tire of repeating and shouting it out: such a regime is absurd and bound to lead to the most disastrous results*. Absurd, because, not

1 See, in our first volume of Jewish Preponderance, chapter one: "Dangerous initiative of philosophism in the opening of a competition in Metz in favor of the Jews"; then, in our work not content with outraging the doctrine and morals of the Gospel, it placed on the same footing of equality, 'on the same rank of honor, darkness and light, evil and good ; and it could not fail to lead to abysses, because, since darkness received the same respect as light, the result was that darkness would prevail.

"But you're wrong!" Liberalism will object, "and that's exaggeration! Let good fight, let truth fight, and, just as the sun's appearance dispels darkness, so truth's redoubled brilliance will dispel errors and vices, and good will triumph."

Here's the doctrinal answer, supported, in fact, by the Jewish question:

Liberalism starts from this assumption, this persuasion: that man finds in his nature equal, forces for good and for evil, and consequently, all forces being equal, that good, because it is good, will prevail, and that light, because it is light, will shine forth and triumph.

But this is a misunderstanding, an immense misunderstanding, from which most of the calamities of the modern age were to flow.

No, a thousand times no, man's nature is no longer equal in good and evil. Yes, this equality existed in the beginning, under the rocking cradles of Eden.

Religion de combat, chapter ve of Book IX: "The Church to love as a mother and treat as a queen", § II and § III.

of the Creator's liberality and magnificent fingers, there was only goodness, framed in innocence, with only the possibility of doing wrong. But since Original Sin, since the venom inoculated by the serpent, the opposite has occurred and become established: there has been a revolution within us. In our vitiated nature, the inclination towards evil has become stronger than the impulse towards good. As the Council of Trent expressly put it, all we had was a weakened and inclined free will. So true is this, that every good thing requires a long apprenticeship; even after acquiring the habit, we almost never accomplish it without effort. So true is this, that the most virtuous man goes through hours of vertigo, during which, were it not for help from above, the good in him would succumb. Man's heart has become an arena,

where the wild beasts are the passions: who has not heard them roar? The Christian alone, when he humbles himself and falls at the foot of the cross, avoids being devoured.

Man's powers of good and evil are no longer equal: this is an undeniable, implacable truth. This being the case, if, from the realm of the individual, we move into the social and political sphere, would it not be an immense misunderstanding and at the same time a supreme danger to start from this regime: common law for all religions, the same respect for all cults? Given that in the public life of all, there is only what there is in the private life of each, from the moment you recognize error and truth, the Jewish and Christian cults, as having the same rights and the same respect, you will arrive at the strangest conclusions. Here is one of those conclusions.

Michelet, in his *Histoire de France*, imagined this lovely, well-known contrast about the Jews:

"Throughout the Middle Ages, persecuted, hunted, recalled, they acted as indispensable intermediaries between the taxman and the taxman's victim, between the agent and the patient, pumping gold from below and returning it to the king from above, with an ugly grimace... But they always had something left... Patient, indestructible, they conquered through time. They solved the problem of making wealth vanish into thin air; freed by the bill of exchange, they are now free, they are masters; from bellows to bellows, here they are on the throne of the world¹⁶⁰."

Who gave them this throne of the world? Common law. And what bellows, in their turn, will they not give?

CHAPTER V

IN THE FACE OF EUROPEAN ENVY,

THE JEWISH BROTHERHOOD RECEIVES

A NEW FORCE FOR COHESION

I. Envy unleashed in France and Europe. – II. The Israelite brotherhood was not very formidable in the past, because it had the brotherhood of Catholic peoples to answer to. – III. It is becoming so, by its very nature, in an environment disintegrated by envy. A sad picture of this disintegration. – IV. Napoleon gives the Hebrew brotherhood a new cohesion, a kind of civil consecration, by creating the Israelite consistories. – V. The Emperor's false measure of forcing Jews to take new names. – VI. Dressed in new clothes, too many of them will not change their inner selves, making it easier for them to exploit the passions that have become more venal in democracies, particularly that of envy.

I

If the Jewish cult has received from the Emperor an organization equivalent to a civil investiture, the Jewish brotherhood, that other very famous and very important thing from Israel, also receives its favor from the imperial hand.

Let's call on the contrast to explain and explain the seriousness of Napoleon's measures in favor of the Jewish fraternity: this contrast is the envy unleashed in France and Europe.

rope.

The book of Proverbs uses this energetic expression: Envy is the rottenness of the bones ¹; it rots, because, at the same time as it gnaws at the soul of the envious, it dries up his body.

Envy has been the rotten bone of Europe, gnawing away at its lifeblood and drying out one nation after another. First unleashed by Luther and the monarchs of the North, jealous of the prerogatives of the Papacy, it renews and extends its wrath with the fury of the Revolution, and the violence and calculations of the Empire.

¹¹ will come an hour in the life of France when a great bishop will utter this cry of alarm, alas! without echo: "¹¹ is remarkable that the evangelists have pointed out, in the hearts of the enemies of Jesus Christ, only one passion as the cause of the death to which they delivered him, the envied one; Per invidiam tradiderunt, it was envy that made him deliver him to Pilate ¹⁶¹ ¹⁶².

"Well, the same passion is gnawing away at France, envy, a terrible envy of all the classes of the nation against one another; the contempt, the disdain, the jealousy of the upper classes against the bourgeois class, of the bourgeoisie against the people, and of the people against all.

"This is not the only cause, no doubt, but this is the real, intimate principle of the French Revolution.

"This is the great inspiration behind everything that was said and done at the time.

"This is what created these rages, absolutely inexplicable without it.

"Yes, France, often so noble and proud, is a vain nation; vanity, vain pride, has always played a terrible role in all its misfortunes.

"And the French Revolution is not over, because it's still going on.

"Union has not been achieved; envy has not been disarmed; vanity, pride and jealousy still embitter and divide us.

"And after eighty years of revolutions, the same evil is, at this very hour, alive and threatening among us h"

Venerable bishop, you have put your finger on the most

holier than thou. The scholars of the Synagogue could not bear that his doctrine should be more highly esteemed than their own; the priests could not bear that they should have more veneration for him alone than for them all. He had to die; the pretext was quickly found: he was violating the Law of Moses. -

You don't believe that, do you, Roman governor? Well, he wanted to make himself king, he declared himself against Caesar, and, faced with this accusation, Pilate's cowardice abandoned him to them*

They were then masters at satisfying their hatred, all their hatred. This is how the Passion came about.

1 Msr Dupanloup, évêque d'Orléans (Introd. au livre de Louis XVII, by M. de Beauchesne).

But, like Babylory of old, France doesn't want to heal!

Indeed, what is it that divides and tears poor France apart?

Is it freedom? No, because everyone in France loves it.

Is it equality? Not at all, since castes no longer exist and, since the famous night of August 4, 1789, the various classes in France have merged and mingled.

Is it property? Not at all, since anyone can become an owner today. Whoever doesn't own a field or a thatched cottage 'at least owns tools and both arms, so he can acquire something else.

So what is it that is tearing unhappy France apart? Cursed envy.

It exploded in that gloomy session in January 1793 when, Louis XVI having been brought to trial, the king's own relative cast the following vote: J'opine pour la mort. At that moment, from the breast of even the most wicked, spontaneously emerged this cry of horror: O the monster!

From her, there was another explosion in the scenes of the Terror, when many Frenchmen were denounced, then had their throats cut, because they owned property coveted by the denouncers: the story of Naboth's vineyard, where dogs came to lick the blood; France witnessed, from April 1792 to August 1794, this horrible story of blood licked by envy...

With Napoleon, the explosions of envy often accompanied those of gunpowder. Palaces, convents, churches and museums were left to pillage. The man who, placing himself above scruples, snatched crowns and thrones like a fowler snatching nests in the forest, encouraged his band of generals to the same depredation. The Emperor's lieutenants," say the chronicles of every country, "laid their hands on the paintings and silverware of convents. Would the Jews have been more rapacious? The masterpieces of Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Murillo made their way to Paris. The Louvre, palace of taste and tact, became the den of Napoleonic envy. Italy shuddered to see itself stripped of its masterpieces: "If it no longer loved nobles, kings and priests, it retained its enthusiasm for the arts; now, it was wounded in this sentiment; to strip it of its paintings was an offense to the majesty of nations 1. Alas! this was the last pride of Italy. The plague of envy, spreading from France to Europe, will corrupt

her more than any other nation. The Sardinians, consumed by this lowly passion, will want to take over the whole peninsula. In the previous chapter, we spoke of Death's dance for the nations. Death has a sardonic laugh, a laugh that hides pain. Strangely enough, this expression comes from Sardinia, and is already found in Homer 163 164. It is said that the Sardinians had a certain festival of the year when they immolated not only their prisoners of war, but also their old men who were over sixty years old, and these unfortunate men were obliged to laugh at this horrible ceremony; hence the name ris sardonien (Sardinian laugh) for any laugh that does not pass the tip of the lips, and which conceals real pain. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Sardinian state took it upon itself to rejuvenate this very ancient locution. Death, in his macabre dance, will invite the small states, duchies and principalities of noble Italy to dance in Sardinia, and duchies and principalities, forced to laugh, will have the joy of forming a great Sardinian kingdom!

Envy, the rottenness of bones, as the book of Proverbs puts it, is all too common in Europe itself.

II

In the face of this gnawing, decomposing evil, the Jewish fraternity emerges from its separate quarters, its private apartments.

Famous at all times, it was, however, not very formidable. It's about to become one, as envy offers it the opportunity. Let's explain its fame, its harmless past, its threatening future.

Fraternity, among the people of Israel, is the cause

i Mme Dacier, transl. of [the Odyssey. – Bescherelle, Dictionnaire national, at the word Sardonique.

of its preservation, the primary cause is a miracle. Scattered on all the beaches of the world, swept away like the leaves of a tree after a storm, the children of this people nevertheless preserve themselves, persist in existence, pass through centuries and nations without merging, without weakening, without losing any of their powerful vitality, and almost laughing at the efforts that have been made time and time again to annihilate them. Such prodigious longevity can only be explained by a miracle. God preserves them, because his justice needs them, to bequeath them later to his mercy. 11 preserves them with as much ease as he preserved their clothes and shoes in the deserts of Arabia, when they walked there for forty years before entering the Promised Land. This is the fortieth year," Moses said to them, "and yet the garments with which you are clothed have not been broken by the length of this time, nor the shoes on your feet worn out L" Well, as God had said to their garments in the desert: "You shall not wear out," so he has said, since the great dispersion, to their existence: "You shall not grow old"; and they continue to exist when everything else dies. The primary cause of the preservation of the Jewish people is therefore obviously a miracle.

But the second cause is fraternal union. Its children stand together like the indissoluble waves of a river, which may well disappear underground for a moment in the face of an obstacle, but which are still united in their unity.

1 Deuteronomy, xxix. reappear in another place, still alive and noisy. They no longer have their Temple, no genealogies, no princes, nothing of their Palestinian splendor, except one thing: the union that, in the form of twelve tribes, Jacob had recommended to them on his deathbed. In the past, whoever attacked one tribe had the other eleven on his hands. Even today, whoever attacks a Jew makes all the others cry out. They support each other, they know each other, they call each other from one end of the earth to the other. Pascal said: "It's a people made up of brothers. Before Pascal, the Book of which they are bearers had instilled in them this powerful maxim: A brother who is helped by his brother is a citadel; and their companies are like the locks, the iron bars, of the gates of cities 165. When they left the cities of their Palestine, it seems they took with them the iron bars and locks around 'their brotherhood.

And yet, however famous, however robust, this Jewish brotherhood, throughout the Middle Ages, was not extremely formidable.

Why not?

Because it had the brotherhood of Catholic peoples to counterbalance and neutralize it.

The Catholic brotherhood was so strong and joyful when, starting with the Saviour who ascended to heaven, it linked first all the joints of the Church, then, under the action of the Church, all the Christian peoples, and triumphed over the many difficulties of the time, and the wretched intrigues of the Catholic Church.

and the wretched intrigues of Judaic rivalry, which never rested! To her applied the blessings of David's canticle of "the union of brothers": Ah, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to be united together! It is like perfume that is poured out It is like dew that comes down It is there that the Lord has poured out his blessing

diction and long lifeL

Joy and vigor, expressed by perfume and dew, spread everywhere, with the union of the brothers :

Joy and vigor in the village. – It was so beautiful, on a Sunday, to meet an entire village on its way to church, the old man striding along, the young husband with his companion on his arm, the children and grandchildren bearing their strong, naïve health to God; all announcing to the outside world, from bald forehead to virgin brow, serenity, pride, self-possession in God, security of conscience, and not a shadow of regret or envy!

Joy and vigor in the corporation. – The corporation was everywhere. No one was alone. Everyone had their place, their power and their honor. Each trade formed its own little body, with its own fund, its own statutes, its own leaders and its own patron saint.

Joy and vigor in the castle, in the cabin, between the castle and the cabin. – The castle protected the hut, and the man in the hut smiled at the man in the castle. When there was conflict, abuse, injustice, the King of France appeared, brought closer to the hut.

Psalms cxxxii. the hut than the castle. Little by little, the man of drudgery and toil was elevated to the rank of the free man, and in the year 1315, the King of France could pronounce these words, admirable for their fraternal closeness: "That there is a kingdom of the Franks where all servitudes have been reduced to franchises."

Joy and vigor in chivalry. – They were Du Guesclin, Bayard, Tancrède, Godefroy de Bouillon: men of war who were moved by the love of God, by the delicate love born of the elevation to which the Christian woman had risen, and by the love of the poor and the weak. The law of chivalry commanded: "to be upright and loyal, to guard the poor and the weak so that the rich and the strong cannot disgrace and trample them, to help with one's power ladies and damoiselles who must always be honored and defended".

Joy and vigor in the city. – A city in the century of St. Louis, taken at random, is a joyful picture. "In Strasbourg, for example, the bishop, with the consent of the canons and burghers, chose from among the inhabitants a provost, who dispensed justice in the public square and collected fines; a burgrave, who maintained the surrounding walls, the cleanliness and alignment of the streets, and settled any disputes between workers; a toll collector, in charge of roads, bridges and measures, all marked with a hot iron; and finally, a coiner, who minted coins and punished counterfeiters. Ordinary burghers pay five days' drudgery a year, and tradesmen pay the equivalent. From time to time, fishermen donate their nets for the bishop's table; the tradesmen, for some equivalent service.

Jewish Preponderance, II. an axe if his roof is damaged; the innkeepers sweep his house every week, and the shovelers go to Cologne to buy furs for him, at his own risk. In exchange, security for all; no military service outside the walls. This city, like the others, places its honor in being a peaceful sojourn and an inviolable asylum, except for thieves¹."

Joy and vigor in the kingdom. – It was the time of the coronation, which was "the great business" of

power, since it reconciled respect, loyalty and love. "In those days, the people forgave the prince his faults, as a child forgives his father his weaknesses; they sympathized with the leaven of humanity that remained in him as well as in the last mortal. The sovereign had faith in his people, and the people had faith in their sovereign. They believed in each other; they had joined hands, not for a day, but before God and for all centuries, in the name of the dead and the living, in the name of ancestors and posterity. The prince descended quietly into the grave, leaving his children in the care of his people, and the people, seeing them small and without strength, guarded them, waiting to be guarded by them 2." Joy and vigor in Christianity. – Christendom was a beautiful and imposing name: it signified the fraternal union of nations that had recognized Christ and formed the guard and bulwark of his Church. Each Christian nation had its own rank

1 Keller, *Histoire de France*, t. I.

2 Lacordaire, *Conférence sur Vautorité*. in the guard; and each had its own standards, ensigns and colors. Together, they recalled the famous square formed by the twelve tribes of Israel as they marched through the desert around the Ark of the Covenant.

The Macedonian square is famous throughout history. It was through this square that Alexander defeated the countless armies of Asia. The one formed by the twelve tribes of Israel around the Tabernacle is no less so; it was its appearance that excited Balaam when he exclaimed, instead of cursing Israel: How beautiful are your pavilions, Jacob; how beautiful are your tents, O Israel! But these ancient phalanxes were not nearly as large as Christianity, which could be called the Catholic square. Four nations, in fact, formed a four-sided battle array around the Church: France, Austria-Hungary, Spain and Italy. The Church, no doubt, was visible and widespread everywhere, but particularly in the midst of these four nations, which protected her and made up her defensive square, her impregnable quadrilateral.

France, with its Charles Martel and Saint Louis, repelling the Saracens;

Spain with its Cid Campeador, repelling the Moors;

Italy with its heroic republics of Genoa, Pisa, Florence and Venice, repelling the pirates who infested the seas;

Austria-Hungary, with its Don Juans, its John Hunyads and its Mathias Corvins, repelling Islamism; Such was the incomparable Catholic square, against which all the forces of the world came to smash outwardly, at the same time as all the gates of Hell came, inside the square, to smash against Peter's pulpit!

This is how the superb Catholic fraternity presented itself, with its vigour and joy, its dew and perfume, extending its flowering to the village, the castle, the hut, the guild, the knighthood, the city, the kingdom, Christendom, everywhere, everywhere. In truth, however compact and widespread the Jewish brotherhood was, it would have been foolhardy to dare measure itself against the brotherhood of Catholic peoples: it would have been like an army of mice gnawing away at the Alps!

But now that envy is rotting Europe, the Jewish brotherhood will have the audacity to do just that.

III

Indeed:

First and foremost, let it be observed that, by virtue of modern principles, this Jewish fraternity has been introduced, implanted and rooted in the very bosom of European society, whereas in the past it was only camped on its flanks, outside it.

No sooner has it settled in, than two strange phenomena occur: the European brotherhood dissolves, while the Jewish one is corroborated.

One dissolves:

In this social bosom that has opened up to Jewish brotherhood, what do we see? The envy that destroys,

crumbles, rots the ancient French and European brotherhood, hitting it in its vigor, in its joy, in its varieties, from the top to the bottom of the social body. Blowing from below, envy brings anarchy; blowing from above, it brings despotism; both blow from irreligion. Under their murderous attacks, the magnificent flowering we were admiring earlier will be mowed down, as if by death's scythe. Let's take it in reverse:

No more Christendom, no more sister-nations, – From now on, nations will only rely on force to preserve themselves; and, as numerous armies are not enough to achieve this goal, entire peoples will be forced to descend into a closed field. Peace will attach itself to the fragile system of equilibrium, borrowed from the weights of a merchant, and which replaces the sweet name of Christendom.

No more kingdom. – France was a beehive; what did it become? Sometimes an empire with only soldiers and horses, sometimes a bastard monarchy with hornets instead of bees, sometimes a republic with wolves or foxes, sometimes a Masonic den with tiger plots. Poor France underwent all these transformations, without ever finding concord among her brothers.

No more provinces. – The old provinces have been abolished, France has been geometrically cut up like a checkerboard, and within these improvised frameworks, only isolated and juxtaposed individuals remain. Monnier's lofty reason foresaw the danger of dissolving these groups formed over time: against the province, which represented general interests, rushed the formidable thrust of particular interests. The Constituent Assembly was aware of these desires and stirred them up 166 167.

No more corporations. – The famous (and, to put it more accurately, odious) law of June 24, 1791 shattered French corporations. Article 2 of this Constituent law, forbidding artisans, employers and workers to meet in the future, to deliberate on their common interests, to appoint syndics, presidents and secretaries, inaugurated the regime of individualism so improperly called the regime of freedom of work. With Napoleon, the Penal Code sanctioned this legislation in article 416, which punishes attempts at union with fines and imprisonment. Whatever was done later, the flourishing guilds lived on.

No more chivalry. – In 1802, the Emperor instituted the Legion of Honor, rewarding military service, distinguished talent and even virtue. But this institution is no longer an Order of fraternity, imposing on its members the obligation to serve and help the small and weak, as was true chivalry. The cross remains the sign of honor on the chest of the brave, but it is no longer the sign of love: it is a chivalry that no longer demands chivalric sentiments.

No more sympathetic closeness between classes, between the hut and the castle. – The division of fortunes, made compulsory by the law of inheritance, has reduced the distance separating the poor from the rich; but, as they draw closer together, they seem to have found new reasons to hate each other, and cast glances full of terror and envy at each other.

No more city. – The houses have never been better aligned, nor the streets better pierced; but trust and concord are absent, even the simple acquaintance owed between children of the same city. An authorized writer once said of Paris, and the same can be said of many other cities in France and Europe: "It's a vast anthill of people working, consuming and enjoying themselves, with no common bond. We live in the same neighborhood, the same house, and we have no connection; we meet, we don't know each other; nothing that brings us together1...".

* Odilon-Barrot, de la Centralisation et de ses Effets.

No more dwellings, no more homes – "In our restless, ever-changing society, more like a nomadic tribe than a people of families united in a common homeland, under its glittering exterior of luxury and pleasure, it's easy to get used to the idea of having no home and living wherever you happen to be, without ties, because you have no affection, without a home, because you have no family, and soon without a homeland, because you have no memories and no hopes L "In the past, the hearth, in the

thatched cottage as well as in the sumptuous house, was the center of everything : of the light that shines, of the warmth that revives, of the food that sustains, of the conversation in which one pours out one's heart, of the family that it constitutes in a way, so much so is it identified with it. In the old days, when morals were simple and faith naive, it was a touching way of counting families to count them by their fires... Today, the fires are going out...

And so it goes!

Beautiful French fraternity, beautiful European fraternity, what have you become? Oh, without doubt, the Catholic fraternity remains, circulates, does its work; but that which was infused into national and European institutions, which was their vigor and joy, that has disappeared. Envy has wrinkled every brow, and lit every eye...

"Europe no longer exists", a famous diplomat 168 169 was forced to say in the middle of the century. And yet, in coming to settle in the midst of a society so impoverished of unity and love, will Jewish brotherhood not become formidable by the very fact of what it is and what it encounters? No more traditions around it, and it is a tradition; no more guilds, and it is a guild; no more agreements, and it is an agreement; no more goals, and it has a goal. This is not to say that the Jewish fraternity does not also have its shortcomings, its small sides; that its members are not accessible, as elsewhere, to jealousy, envy, animosity and hatred among themselves: it is defective, very defective, we agree; but it is organized to resist. It would like to dissolve, but it can't: that's the miracle of preservation. Its members are enclosed in an old groove that goes back to Abraham's flanks, in which they all slept; as soon as they are born, they are introduced, engaged, in the old groove, and thereafter, even if of mediocre intelligence or inferior condition, they become strong and pull themselves through the old groove. They walk where their fathers of ten, twenty, forty centuries walked, heirs to their thoughts, their secrets, their hopes, their precautions: they are strong! Isaiah was not mistaken when he referred to Abraham, in these words, to his descendants: The rock from which you were hewn, the deep quarry from which you were drawn h Now, behold, the rock, the block they formed in their turn, finds itself, after four thousand years, intact and formidable in the midst of a pulverized society.

1 Isaiah, ch. li, 1.

How could France, and then Europe, fail to understand that by suppressing national traditions, provinces, corporations and associations, they would be giving this bloc a preponderant weight? During the Sanhedrin meeting of 1807, a small incident occurred which aroused the admiration of one of the Emperor's commissioners. This commissioner recounts it thus in his Memoirs:

"Following one of the conferences where M. Molé had been even more bitter than usual, and where I had endeavored to destroy the bad effect of some of his words, several of the Israelites came to see me the next day, and, not knowing how to express their gratitude, they ended by assuring me that before six months had passed, not even their brothers in China would know what gratitude all the Jews owed me for the good I wanted to do them, and for the excellence of my dealings with them. This sentence has always struck me as very remarkable, in that it shows the extent to which these men, scattered over the surface of the world, at such great distances, living under such different skies, and in the midst of dissimilar customs, maintain relations with each other, identify with each other's interests, and are animated by the same spirit.

"We were told, in such a way that we could not doubt it, that when a Jew without personal resources had a pressing matter to attend to at a great distance from the place where he lived, he could present himself to the Rabbi or to the principal figure of the Jewish Community, and that, on the statement of his needs, a certificate was issued, enabling him to travel from Europe to the farthest reaches of Asia, welcomed and paid for by the Jews who, from distance to distance, found themselves in his path, and who everywhere treated him, not as a poor man who begs for a little help, but as a brother with whom

we share what we have *. "

Well, faced with the block of such fraternity introduced into French society, what did the Revolution and Empire align in the French?

An unsuspecting publicist replies:

"A dust of disintegrated individuals 170 171, puny dwarfs 172."

This was already too much.

But hasn't revolutionary fatality still led Napoleon to confer upon the Hebraic brotherhood the civil consecration that follows?

IV

Let's return to the decree organizing the Jewish cult, dated from the Tuileries palace on March 17, 1808. This decree established that there would be not only a Synagogue, but also a Consistoire, i.e. a council of Notables, in each department containing a sufficient number of Israelites.

A new decree, issued from the imperial camp in Madrid on December 11, 1808, established thirteen Jewish synagogues in the Empire, and consequently thirteen consistories.

At that time, the synagogues and their consistories were based in Paris, Strasbourg, Wintzenheim, Mainz, Metz, Nancy, Trier, Goblentz, Crévelt, Bordeaux, Marseille, Turin and Casai.

According to the table of synagogue districts published in the Bulletin des Lois, the total number of Jews in France at that time was 77,162.

That's nearly eighty thousand Jews firmly established in thirteen districts.

In addition, a central Consistoire for all Israelites in France was set up in Paris, with the aim of maintaining regular relations with the government and with the consistories in the various districts.

A special decree, dated from the Palais de Saint-Cloud on October 19, 1808, regulated its installation as follows:

Napoleon, Emperor of the French, King of Italy, and Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine.

We have decreed and do decree the following:

Article premier. - The Members of the Central Consistory of Jews established in our good city of Paris will be installed by our State Councillor, Prefect of the Seine department, into whose hands they will swear, on the Bible, the oath prescribed by article 6 of the law of 18 germinal year X.

Art. II - Our Minister of Religious Affairs is charged with the execution of the present decree.

Signed: NAPOLEON.

By the Emperor,

The Minister, Secretary of State, Signed: Hugues B. Maret.

So here we have a sort of Jewish capital installed in the world's first capital, to command districts whose number will soon increase.

Endowed with a capital city, reunited with Jerusalem in France in Napoleon's words, the Jewish fraternity acquired an importance that would be hard to deny.

In addition to the autonomy and longevity it derives from the Eternal's design, it now possesses a civil organization, which it derives from French legislation. The Emperor has placed it, like a cannon found on the ground, on a mount. As the disintegration of other guilds and associations becomes more pronounced, the Jewish guild will grow stronger, benefiting from the durability of time, the new cohesion brought about by legislation, and the complacency of successive governments and ministries.

The Central Consistory, like a great beacon of light maintained by Fortune, will project these governmental and ministerial complacencies onto all Israelite constituencies. The Minister of State, the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of War, will be the guardians of Israel's interests. What an addition to the old corporation from Palestine! In the past, it described itself as follows: "The most disheveled buyer of old hats or orange merchant in Jewry is very

sure of obtaining the means to celebrate Easter with dignity. The most fallen in his trade is not fallen in the eyes of his co-religionists; he gets back on his feet with their help. The poorest may possess qualities that place him high in their esteem; and many of the most wretched and filthy Hebrews who roam the streets, buying old clothes and skins, are known in the community as knowing by heart large portions of Scripture 173;"

And now, here's the difference:

From ragged as it was itself, in many of its members, the Jewish fraternity has the right to say: the laws of France form my pedestal, and the ministers of the State burn their incense before me!

In truth, there's something very strange about European disintegration, on the one hand, and Israelite cohesion, on the other. One would be tempted to believe that the roles are going to be reversed. The nations were the gathered, and the Jews the scattered. Seeing the ruin of kingdoms, traditions, customs, corporations, families, fortunes and homes, one wonders: aren't the nations becoming the dispersed? To see, on the contrary, the arrival of the Jews by all the avenues, their march to the summits, the concentration of resources in their hands, the help, wanted or unwanted, of revolutions and empires in their extraordinary recapitulation, one wonders no less profoundly: are they not the legendary dispersed of centuries and spaces who are becoming the gathered? On both sides, what a mystery Providence is preparing!

But let's continue our tale of historical surprises.

V

Another of Napoleon's measures, dictated by very wise motives, is about to turn sour, with opposite results, according to the irony of the Revolution. This measure was the decree obliging all Jews to take new family names.

It was customary in Jewish communities, brought from the East, to have no patronymic or family name. In the first ages of the world, family names were unknown. Each individual had only one name, usually a meaningful one, and distinguished himself from his namesakes only by adding to his name: son of so-and-so. The Jews, stationary on the road through the centuries, continued this way of naming themselves wherever they were dispersed. Taking their names from the Old Testament, they called themselves, each for his own compta, Jacob, Nathan, Moses, Solomon, etc., adding to distinguish themselves from other Jacobs, Nathan, Moses and Solomon, the phrase: son of such and such; Jacob son of Baruch, who in turn is son of Samuel, who in turn is son of Jonah. However, they frequently replaced the awkward oriental formula with the name of the town or village they lived in, in which case they called themselves: Samuel of Frankfurt, David of Carcassonne, Abraham of Worms, Nathan of Lisbon. The absence of patronymic names among them, and their sole source of names, the Bible, had serious drawbacks. As the number of names provided by the Old Testament was necessarily very limited, the result was great confusion in the designation of individuals, and consequently a host of misunderstandings in business affairs. This also made it easy for the sons of Israel to change their names; and, as the reports submitted to the Emperor complain, they changed their names whenever they found it convenient or advantageous to do so, or when they changed cities. In short, this way of naming themselves all too often provided the temptation of the coppice where hares disappear!

An imperial decree was issued in Bayonne on July 20, 1808. It enjoined all Jews in the Empire :
To take: A patronymic or family name; A fixed first name.

They were forbidden to choose a name from Scripture or a town name as their family name. h Then a singular efflorescence took place:

For the formation of surnames, names from the Bible were disfigured, tortured, lengthened, narrowed. Examples:

Moses gave Mosches, Moche, Manche, Manche;

Lévi gave Lœivy, Lèvilliers, Ludwig, Lévisthal, Halèvy ;
Mov^aaà.oxv^Brahm; Israël, Disraëli; Ephraïm, Ephrussi.

Astronomy, botany, geography and zoology were also used as sources of family names. A witty nomenclator says:

There was the astronomical Jew: Stem, star; Goldstar h, gold star; Morgenstern, morning star; Abendstern, evening star; Mondschein, moonlight.

There was the botanical Jew: Rosenzweig, rose branch; Blum, flower; Kornblüth, wheat flower; Rosenthal, rose valley.

Then there was the geographical Jew: Crémieux, Carcassonne, Worms, Lisbon, Charleville. In the long run, little attention was paid to the article of the imperial decree forbidding the use of city names as surnames.

There was the zoological Jew: Bear, bear, with its cubs: Meyerbeer, Cerfbeer; Wolf, wolf; Katz, cat; Hirsch, deer; Hahn, rooster; Ganserl, little goose.

1 It was Mr. Grézet, successor to Mr. Champagny, who was entrusted by the Emperor with the report and measures concerning this change of names (Arch. nat., S. secr., AF. IV, 328. dr.23i0. Report from M. Grézet to Napoleon, May 18, 1808).

Jewish Preponderance, II. fi

Most of these names, as you can see, were taken from German, because most of the Empire's Israelites lived in Alsace, Lorraine and neighboring countries.

All this is the pleasant side of this transformation; but here's the serious side:

Wasn't Napoleon's act, which was undoubtedly very useful, if we consider only commercial matters, about to become a false measure, with regard to major interests?

Wasn't it indeed a serious matter, excessively serious, to confer new names on a whole people of emancipated people? Along with the granting of civil rights, this was the final step in recalling them to a life of dreaded unknowns. The languages of the peoples and countries they were entering were handed over to them. To Frenchify, Germanize, Anglicanize and Italianize Jewish names was to introduce the Hebrews into the most intimate of nations: what could be more intimate than names? Two perils would ensue:

Firstly, by inviting them to Frenchize, Germanize and Italianize their names, Napoleon was removing the surest bulwark of the French homeland, and of other homelands. A name is not only a heritage, but also a bulwark. For eighteen centuries, Christian peoples had been saying to the Jewish people: "In your country, your children are named this way; in ours, our children are named that way. Keep your names, and we'll keep ours.

It really was a line of demarcation, a line of defense;

Napoleon abandoned it.

By seeping into names like water from the Jordan, they will contribute to the disintegration of the European family: the poor brotherhood of peoples didn't need this!

Another peril, related to the previous one. By inviting them to adorn themselves with new names, Napoleon was going to make it easier for them to assault and invade dignities, high offices and power. Had they continued to call themselves simply Jacob, Tobias, Israel, Baruch, Moses, they would have been more timid in presenting themselves, in crossing the ranks of the society that welcomed them, to climb to the summits. They would have confined themselves to sitting in the vicinity of the last place, instead of aiming for the first. An Israel would never have been Prime Minister of England, but a Disraeli will. Baruch or Tobie would never have dared, in France, to seek the portfolio of justice, Crémieux will take it. Thanks to their new names, like the Romans under the cover of those siege armors called turtles, they'll be able to climb the ladder, invade and occupy more easily. How could the

Emperor fail to understand the danger of new names for Jews, who, to neutralize and weaken the old monarchical nobility, had created an imperial nobility, giving it the names of its victories? In truth, touching names is not a trivial matter. Whoever writes these reflections will never forget the impression he felt when, under Napoleon III, in the famous lawsuit brought against Talleyrand-Périgord to prevent him from receiving from the Emperor the name Mont- the envy unleashed in Europe morency that was about to be extinguished, Berryer qualified the usurpation with these words: Taking the name of Montmorency, dest as if one were taking the diamonds of the Crown! For want of France's beautiful names, coats of arms and armorial bearings, the new citizens supplied by Judea will acquire castles and estates; and in this substitution, Napoleon's false measure will have served them only too well.

Wouldn't it have been more prudent to let them call themselves what they called themselves in the past, at the risk of seeing trade bills sometimes compromised? A greater disaster would not have been added to the crumbling of Christian society.

VI

So here we have the Israelites, organized to intervene and succeed, to acquire and conquer.

Is this their interference?

Of course not!

The Constituante had emancipated them; but they, like timid hares, remained huddled in their burrows, their separate quarters. Napoleon rudely dragged them out and, with new names, transformed them into wolves (Wolf), cats (Katz), bears (Beer), lions (Loioe), until the day they transformed themselves into barons, engineers, generals and ministers.

generals, ministers. He gave their cult a public lustre and lent it the support of government, treating the Synagogue almost as the equal of the Church. He underpinned their ancient, solid confraternity with the double counterforce of the provincial consistories and the central Consistoire, tripling the strength of that confraternity. All the Israelites had to do was accept his gifts and carry out his orders. Until then, the organization of their preponderance had been more or less passive.

Where will their cooperation begin? Where will their interference awaken?

With the passions!

There are two great forces here on earth, by means of which power is acquired: ideas and passions.

Ideas formed the genesis of Jewish power, the ideas of the Revolution then put into effect and translated into institutions for them by Napoleon: for, as Mme de Staël so aptly put it, he a'été la Révolution à cheval. The Emperor consolidated, enrégimenté, encaserné the Jews, their rights, their synagogues, their rabbis, their consistories, by virtue of the ideas of equality, freedom of conscience, freedom of worship, principles of the Revolution.

Ideas had thus begun Jewish power, but it was with the help of passions that they themselves would develop it.

During the centuries when they were kept on the sidelines, the Jews did not act through ideas, but through passions. By means of gold or beauty, they flattered and encouraged the dangerous inclinations of this or that powerful monarch or poor peasant, and thereby enslaved them to a certain extent.

With the onset of the Revolution, their power will become formidable, because this time, not only passions, but ideas become their forces; and not only with isolated individuals, but also with crowds and governments.

From 1791, the year of their emancipation, until 1808, the year of the Emperor's last decree in their favor, the ideas of the Revolution did their business without them needing to stir up much. But from then on, installed as citizens and, as it were, dressed in new clothes by Napoleon, they were going to move and operate. And since, unfortunately, many of them had not changed in their innermost selves

(and how could they change, leaving aside the Christian religion?), they resorted to their old means of influence, to the procedure with which they are familiar: passions.

And what, of all passions, has prepared for their activity, for their rivalry, for their need for domination, a field of operations, a field of maneuvers, where they are sure to have every chance, every success, what is this passion? envy.

We have seen the disastrous infiltration of envy rotting French and European society, making it weak and dusty in the face of the lively, renewed forces of Jewish brotherhood.

Perhaps a remedy lies in the more regular advent of democracies?

Yes indeed, there is a remedy, if these democracies know how to take up again, better than the Empire did, the path of the Catholic Church, of the Kingdom of God, where they would rediscover the beautiful fraternity of the old days, which would soon silence the Jew.

But if the democracies want to fulfill their destinies outside the Church, who in the end can teach us what will save them from envy, and its lamentable consequence of Jewish domination?

Indeed, aren't democracies exposed, more than other forms of government, to the disadvantages of envy and its rottenness? Consider the following:

"The love of well-being has become the dominant national taste; the great current of human passions flows in this direction, dragging everything along with it.

"All conditions being more or less equal, everyone sees the same opportunities to rise. The democratic feeling of envy then expresses itself in a thousand different ways. ,

"In aristocratic governments, the men who come to office are rich people who desire only power; in democracies, statesmen are poor and have their fortunes to make. 11 It follows that, in aristocratic states, governments have little access to corruption and only a very moderate taste for money, whereas the opposite is true of democratic peoples."

Alongside these very accurate reflections, the loyal writer who traced them placed the following, a kind of liberal euphemism:

"Perhaps in democracies, there are no fewer men to sell, but there are almost no buyers; and, besides, you'd have to buy too many people at once to achieve the goal."

In his generous views on democracies, M. de Tocqueville has certainly forgotten the Jews "as buyers", and their means of buying "too many people at once!"

BOOK THREE

THE ISRAELITES TRIUMPH OVER NAPOLEON

CHAPTER I

NAPOLEON'S ABOUT-FACE AGAINST THE JEWS

I. The decree of March 17 1808 restricting the civil rights of Jews. Emotion and anger in Jewish communities. – II. Clause at the bottom of the decree: threat of extension after ten years. An old rooster laughs. – III. Reasons for this about-face: this is not a break from Napoleon, but a disciplinary measure to tame the Jewish character. Supporting evidence. – IV. The Jews, on the other hand, see only a rupture. Their accusation against Molé. Furtado's efforts to exempt his co-religionists from the measures of exception and rigor. Napoleon is inflexible. – V. Jewish impassivity in the midst of the suffering caused by the application of the decree: a touching anecdote.

I

Napoleon's politics were fond of theatrical coups. It placed clashes and shocks alongside benefits, the better to tame them. It ended with the effects of fear, when it had begun with the attractions of goodness, contrary to what happens in the Lord's religion.

The Jews know all about it.

Although Napoleon's behaviour had been a little brusque, he had shown himself to be very favourable

towards them; for their part, they had willingly bestowed upon him the praise attributed in the Bible to the Messiah. All of a sudden, the Emperor did an about-face.

On March 17, 1808, a double decree appeared in the Bulletin des Lois, organizing the Israelite cult in the Empire and assigning it its place in the sun of the French homeland: a measure we outlined in chapter ive of the previous book.

But this decree was not the only one. It was accompanied by another. And here it was, restricting the civil rights of the trusting Hebrews who were savoring, in France, the comforts and joys of a new Promised Land: hadn't the Emperor, through his commissioner Molé, led them to hope that they would find Jerusalem in France?

This was an unexpected flip side to the messianic medal.

As happens whenever one's most cherished interests are affected, the Jews paid no attention to the first decree, which was a blessing, and vented all their anger on the second. They began to cry like peacocks against the eagle.

Was this, then, a return to the offensive against Judaism on the part of the Emperor, a declaration of war after appearances of peace?

We shall now recount the infamous and exasperating decree, after which we shall reveal, with documents in hand, its true significance in Napoleon's thinking.

By this decree, dated from the Tuileries Palace, March 17 1808:

I. - a) Loans made by Jews to minors, **WOMEN, MILITARY, ARE DECLARED VOID.**

All loan commitments made by Jews to minors, without their guardian's authorization; to women, without their husband's authorization; to military personnel, without their captain's authorization, if it is a soldier or non-commissioned officer, or the commanding officer's authorization, if it is an officer: will be null and void by operation of law, without the bearers or transferees being able to avail themselves of this fact, and our courts will not authorize any legal action.

b) Loans made to servants, or on instruments **OF WORK, ARE ALSO DECLARED VOID.**

No Jew may lend on collateral to servants or pawnbrokers.

Jews may not pledge the instruments, utensils, tools or clothing of workers, day laborers or servants.

IL - Their fraudulent or usurious claims ARE VOID.

No bill of exchange, promissory bill, bond or promise, subscribed by one of our subjects who is not a merchant, in favor of a Jew, may be demanded without the bearer proving that the value thereof has been provided in full and without fraud.

Any claim whose capital is aggravated in an obvious or hidden way, by the accumulation of interest at more than five percent, will be reduced by our courts. If the interest added to the capital exceeds ten percent, the claim will be declared usurious and, as such, cancelled.

III. - Trading is subject to conditions of reliability and caution.

Henceforth, no Jew may engage in any trade, business or traffic whatsoever, without having received, for this purpose, a patent from the Prefect of the department, which will only be granted on the basis of precise information, and a certificate: P from the municipal council stating that the said Jew has not engaged in usury or illicit traffic; .2° from the consistory of the synagogue, in whose district he lives, attesting to his good conduct and probity.

This certificate must be renewed every year.

Our Public Prosecutors at our Courts are specially charged with having the said patents revoked by a special decision of the Court, whenever it comes to their attention that a patented Jew is engaged in usury or fraudulent dealing.

Any act of commerce by an unpatented Jew will be null and void.

No Jew will be allowed to lend on pledge to other persons, unless it is recorded by a notary, who will

certify, in the deed, that the cash has been counted in his presence and that of witnesses, under penalty of losing all rights on the pledges, which our tribunals and courts may order to be returned free of charge.

IV. - Alsace is forbidden to new Jews.

No Jew not currently domiciled in our departments of Haut and Bas-Rhin will be allowed to take up residence there.

V. - The other departments of the empire will only be accessible to Jews as long as they are exclusively farmers.

No Jew, not currently domiciled, will be admitted to take up residence in the other departments of our Empire, unless he or she has acquired rural property there and is engaged in agriculture, without engaging in any trade, business or traffic. Exceptions to the provisions of the present article may be made by virtue of a special authorization issued by Us.

VI. - All Jewish conscripts must perform their MILITARY service, WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO BE REPLACED.

The Jewish population in our départements will not be allowed to provide replacements for conscription: consequently, all Jewish conscripts will be subject to personal service.

On reading this decree, all the Jewish communities in France were exasperated. There was only one cry. "By this odious, infamous decree of March 17, 1808, we are once again outlawed. It revives some of the most humiliating provisions of the ordinances of the Middle Ages. Here we are, plunged back into the deepest humiliation L".

What is true is that, after having received the most dazzling protection granted to them in any century, the Jews "suddenly experienced a violent upheaval in their fortunes and in their persons "2.

1 Halphen, Recueil des Lois, préfacé, p. xlii, p. 301.

2 Bédarride, les Juifs en France, p. 423.

It was said of the Emperor: "He had promised us that we would be citizens without restriction. He deceived the whole world, he confiscated freedom everywhere. How could he have kept his word to the Jews 175?

II

Amidst the cries of fury rising up in the Jewish quarters as the decree was read out, an attentive ear would have discerned the laughter of an old rooster, the ancestor, through the age of his family tree, of the one immortalized by La Fontaine:

On the branch of a tree stood sentinel

A shrewd old rooster.

And our old cock in himself began to laugh 2.

And why did this laughter suddenly interrupt the cries of fury?

At the bottom of the decree was this clause:

The provisions contained in the present decree will be enforced for ten years, in the hope that at the expiration of this period, and through the effect of the various measures taken with regard to the Jews, there will no longer be any difference between them and the other citizens of our Empire; excepting, however, if our hope were deceived, to extend their enforcement, for such time as may be deemed appropriate.

Thus, after having been tested for ten years, the provisions contained in the decree could be extended indefinitely, should the expectation of their good results be deceived. The Jews had to laugh!

Ten years was more than enough time to see the Emperor's decree, and perhaps the Emperor himself, disappear from the world stage. Any agreement with the sons of Israel that makes use of time is almost always a ruinous bargain for the other contracting party. Wasn't time included in their baggage as

peddlers?

Our Jews, threatened by this ten-year date in the decree of March 17, had the following story from their brothers in the East, which happened more than once in Persia and Morocco:

The Shah in Persia (the Sultan in Morocco) summoned the Jews and their rabbis. Dogs that you are", he told them, "I have called you here to force you to recognize Mohammed. Set a time for the coming of your Messiah. I will be patient until that time. Then, either you will be Mohammedans, or you will lose your possessions and your lives. The frightened Jews were given eight days to ponder their response. After conferring together, they came to announce to the Shah that their great Liberator, so patiently awaited, would appear in thirty years' time; and, alongside the dogmatic decision, they gently deposited two million in gold¹.

¹ Malo, *Histoire des juifs*, p. 308-10; p. 340.

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At the end of thirty years, the Shah's eyes were closed by death; or, if he lived, a new sum came, like an infusion of poppies, to close them on the dogmatic question.

Certainly, to put the all-powerful and very energetic Emperor of the French to sleep, poppies were out of the question; but there remained, as an auxiliary, the time that fades laurels and decrees. The Jews had time on their side. That's why, in the midst of the angry cries raised by the reading of the decree of March 17, 1808, their old rooster laughed. He laughed at the date of ten years assigned by the eagle to the extension of his decree, if his hopes were deceived.

III

We know all about the "infamous" decree and the exasperation of the Jewish population. Let's turn now to the legislator.

In the Emperor's mind, was this decree, with its about-face, a rupture between his government and the Jews?

The word "rupture" has been used. It's not the right word. The right word is: measure of discipline; by his decree, Napoleon wanted to bring the Jews to comply with what he intended to do with them. He was faithful to his plan of operation concerning them. Right from the start of his reign, he wanted to make them more honest, useful, brothers of the French. It was to achieve this goal more surely that he summoned the Assembly of Notables-Israelites, then the Great Sanhedrin, and dictated their responses. The decree of March 17, 1808, harsh as it was, followed in the regenerator's plans the convocation of the High Assembly. The Sanhedrin's role was to enlighten doctrinally; the Emperor reserved for himself that of acting militarily: Help yourself, and the Emperor will help you. The decree was therefore not a spontaneous act on Napoleon's part; it was a carefully considered one. In fact, it took a long time to draw up. As early as March 6, 1806, before the convocation and meeting of the Jewish assemblies (the Notables, on July 26, 1806; the Sanhedrin, on February 10, 1807), the Emperor had been preoccupied with the measures to be enacted against the Israelites.¹⁷⁶ They were postponed until after the meeting and separation of the learned and docile Assembly.

But why (one is entitled to wonder with some surprise), why this bias, on the part of the sovereign, to call for exceptional and severe measures, when the reforms and promises demanded by him were all going to be granted?

Because the Emperor was convinced, and Portalis and above all Molé corroborated this conviction, that neither an appeal to Jewish national representation in an assembly of Notables, nor an appeal to religious sanction in a meeting of the Grand Sanhedrin, would be sufficient to change a people reputed to be indomitable in its habits. Appeals to honor had to be combined with measures of discipline. The Emperor exclaimed in the Council of State: "We don't complain about Protestants and Catholics the way we do about Jews. This is because the evil that the Jews are doing does not come from individuals,

but from the very constitution of this people; they are locusts and caterpillars ravaging France. And Portalis had concluded, with this conclusion, a memoir to which the Emperor gave preference over that of M. de Champagny: "It could not be unreasonable or unjust to subject to exceptional laws a kind of corporation which, by its institutions, principles and customs, remains constantly separated from general society."

It was under the influence of these thoughts that, as early as 1806, the Emperor premeditated and decreed the disciplinary measures laid down in the lightning decree.

The Grand Sanhedrin held in 1807, despite its obedience and adulation, did not have the talent to defeat the severity in store.

As for the year that elapsed between the separation of the Sanhedrin and the thunderclap of the decree (1807-8), it was so full, alas! of Jewish deceit and trickery, that it confirmed the Emperor in his severe dispositions and caused him to issue the decree. What deceptions? Among others, these:

In 1806, to save the unfortunate farmers of Alsace crushed by Jewish usury from complete ruin, Napoleon had decreed a one-year reprieve on all mortgage debts owed by these farmers to their rapacious creditors. What did these rapacious creditors do? They came up with the idea of replacing the mortgage registrations with contracts of sale with the option of repurchase (i.e., with the option of repurchase for the seller, on condition of returning the price to the buyer within an agreed timeframe). With the help of these contracts of sale with right of repurchase, maint paysan had obtained money by selling his land, which he had given away at a loss. Once the deadline had passed, and the poor farmer had been unable to return the price, the usurer became the legal and irrevocable owner of the land he had acquired at a modest price, and passed it on to other hands at a huge profit. This kind of loan," wrote M. de Champagny, "is more harmful to agriculture than usury itself, since it tends to take productive soil out of the hands of the farmer and turn it into an object of traffic.

Other deceptions. - Since leaving Palestine, the Jews had always had an aversion to the profession of arms. But, by accepting to become French citizens, they had become dependent on the flag and were obliged to take part in conscription. Now, either because service was hard under Napoleon, or because the opportunities of trade seemed preferable to those of war, they were not at all at fault.

1 Arch. nat. S. Int. B B. 16. 639. M. Champagny, min. de l'intér. au min. de la justice, June 26, 1806; S. Secr. AF. IV. 300 dr. 2151. Report from M. Champagny to Napoleon, July 17, 1806.

dodge. Official reports complain of this evasion:

Out of sixty-six Jews who, within a period of six years, were to form part of the Moselle contingent, not one entered the armies L

In the department of Mont-Tonnerre, until 1806, Jews constantly evaded the laws of conscription¹⁷⁷
178.

Although the Jewish population of the Mont-Tonnerre department reached 1,000 residents, it provided only 29 Israelite conscripts from 1806 to 1810 ¹⁷⁹.

It's easy to understand why Napoleon, for whom military service was the most important duty a citizen should fulfill, leapt at these reports and exclaimed: "I'll teach them to be soldiers! Indeed, the seventeenth article of the March 1808 decree, bursting like a fanfare in Jewish quarters, announced that "all Jewish conscripts would be subject to personal service, and that the Jewish population, in all departments of the empire, would not be allowed to provide replacements for conscription".

From the foregoing, it is clear that the Emperor had no intention of breaking with the Jews, but rather of taming and subjugating them. He wanted to create a school of discipline for them: "He only enacted 'exceptional' measures for them in order to make them renounce their equally exceptional habits¹⁸⁰". Moreover, the categorical language used by His Majesty in this "infamous" decree proves that this was indeed the Emperor's intention. The clause announcing that the present decree would be in force for ten

years adds: "We hope that at the end of this period, and through the effect of the various measures taken with regard to the Jews, there will no longer be any difference between euoc and the other citizens of our Empire".

The Emperor's formal intention was therefore to complete their incorporation into society by shaping them in the modern way, which the Constituent Assembly had forgotten to do, and not to push them back into the permanent exceptions of the Middle Ages.

His about-turn was merely a maneuver.

1 It is absolutely unfair and untrue to equate the measures taken by the Emperor with those taken under the ancien régime. "Under the ancien régime, everything was calculated to keep Jews out of society: they were forbidden to acquire land; they were barred from all honourable professions; they respected all their national laws, even those most opposed to modern civilization; they were allowed their own courts. And if precautions are taken to prevent or repress their fraud and usury, it's only after having somehow forced them to seek a resource in these shameful speculations. Here, the procedure is quite the opposite: not only are all honest professions open to Jews, but every effort is made to lure them into them by the dual influence of penalties and rewards. Not only did we not want to exclude them from civil society, but we left no stone unturned to make them feel the need and inspire them with the desire to join. Precautions are still taken against their frauds and their habits of illegitimate trafficking; but this is because these habits are the greatest obstacle to their fusion into the national unity, and their excuse is no longer even a kind of necessity." (Hallez, *les Juifs en France*, p. 222-3.)

IV

The Jews, for their part, did not believe in this maneuver of moral warfare. It cannot be denied that the decree of March 17, 1808 was a work of hatred and repulsion.

On what do they base their pessimistic judgment?

Firstly, on French legislation. "Indeed, hadn't Israelites emancipated by the Constituent Assembly enjoyed civil rights for seventeen years? Now, suddenly, a very specific code, completely at odds with the principles of public law, was applied to them. Was it not hatred that had struck down the constitutional principle of the equality of citizens before the law? Wasn't it repulsion that stigmatized a whole class of citizens, by subjecting them to rigorous and exceptional rules?

A kind of irony in the work of the Sanhedrin seemed to confirm this pessimistic judgment. The Emperor had obtained from the high Assembly everything he had wished to be granted. The notables and rabbis had answered his terrible questionnaire as troop children repeat before the inspector-general the lesson they have been taught in the barracks 2 :

2 Halévy, *Histoire des juifs*.

8 See pages 73-81 above.

and, notwithstanding this docility, weren't the Israelites suddenly sequestered like scoundrels? To add insult to injury, the Assembly had itself supplied the rods with which to whip them. It had expressed, in enthusiastic terms, its patriotic ambition to see Israel procure numerous remarkable soldiers, regenerate its commerce, etc.; and here, taking it at its word, only Jews were forbidden the faculty of making replacements for themselves in military service, and, for a few cases of usury that had occurred since the Sanhedrin's meeting, all Israelite commerce was subjected to tyrannical shackles.

The thought of having to provide the rods themselves infuriated rabbis and notables alike. In fact, once Napoleon had obtained from them everything he had decided to grant himself, he no longer spared them. "The Sanhedrites understood, but a little late, that they had themselves, by their own resolutions, provided Napoleon with weapons against the race whose cause they were defending.

Instead of savoring the milk and honey they had hoped for in a new Promised Land, our Hebrews drank all the salty waters of the Dead Sea!...

"Napoleon has deceived us!" cried one Jew after another, "may heaven avenge us! An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth: the law of retaliation is back, since French law no longer covers us!

Influential and better-informed Jews were less unjust towards the Emperor than the collection of 1 Fauchille, *La Question juive en France sous le premier Empire*, p. 61.

hawkers and loan sharks who had been hit hard by the decree. Indeed, those in the know accused Count Molé of instigating the austerity measures. The truth was, however, that Molé could not stand Jews, nor the belief that their blood would dare to enter his veins*. Taking advantage of the fact that the Emperor was occupied on the Niemen, on the eve of the battle of Friedland, he had, through intrigue with his colleagues, brought about an emergency vote on the articles against the Jews 181 182: all the sovereign had to do was ratify them.

Molé's indefatigable adversary, Furtado, made a supreme attempt to extricate his co-religionists from the measures of exception and rigor. The first time, at the head of a deputation from the Sanhedrin, he had gone to Fontainebleau to protest, in front of Napoleon, against the repressive measures whose terms were being studied by the Conseil d'Etat: the Emperor had not deigned to receive them 183. A second time, secretly warned that the decree was about to be published, the generous Israelite leapt from the banks of the Seine to those of the Niemen. The Emperor received him at Tilsitt, greeted him kindly, but was adamant about preparing the decree¹⁸⁴.

When the decree appeared, the Jews, in turn, stubbornly believed that the Middle Ages were coming back for them. The "infamous" decree had squeezed their hearts: the era of enthusiasm for Napoleon was over.

Jewish impassivity was left entirely to bear the suffering that the application of the decree would bring. The struggle to triumph over Napoleon was also to be organized.

A touching anecdote, reported by the Archives Israélites, illustrates this impassivity.

V

"In a village in Alsace in 1807, Mar- dochée Blum lived with his wife Rebekah and son David. As in all Jewish families of the time, the father did business, the son studied Talmud and the mother took care of the household. Mordecai Blum was not a wealthy man, but by his activity and industry he knew how to make the most of his capital, and by the credit he enjoyed he was able to bring even the heaviest undertakings to a successful conclusion. Like all his colleagues, he dealt in everything, bought buildings, sold them and occasionally did a bit of discounting. Loyal in business, kind and benevolent, he was generally loved and esteemed, at least as much as an Israelite could be at that time in Alsace, where a popular prejudice, too old to be easily eradicated, had established the principle that all Jews were usurers.

"David Blum was a tall, handsome young man in his twenties, with a calm, thoughtful character, brooding fresh thoughts and noble sentiments beneath a cold, shy exterior. He had not confined himself to the study of rabbinical books, but knew how to read German and French, and had picked up a few notions of history from old books bought at a bargain price from an emigrant. As a result, he was regarded as the local scholar, and all the girls to be married envied him Sarah, his fiancée, a young Jewish girl with black hair and a keen eye, who brought him a handsome dowry in marriage.

"The Blum family was living happily and contentedly, awaiting the moment set for the union of the young engaged couple, when the promulgation of an imperial decree shattered the scaffolding of happiness that had seemed so solid. This decree, which left an indelible mark on Napoleon's reign, and is marked by intolerance, injustice and neglect of the law of nations, decreed that from March 17 1808 all French Jews would be subject to military service, without the option of being replaced, Among other draconian provisions, it stipulated that the payment of any bond, promise or bill of exchange subscribed to a Jew by a non-Israelite Frenchman could henceforth not be demanded without the beneficiary proving that he had provided the full value. It's easy to imagine the disruption that such exceptional

measures must have caused in Alsace, where trade, especially in money, was almost exclusively in the hands of Israelites; but of the many victims of this iniquitous decree, none was more violently offended than the Blum family.

The hour of conscription had come for David; appointed by fate, he was obliged to leave his parents; and as he was leaving, his face burning with the tears his desperate mother had shed over him under the pretext of giving him the farewell kiss, he received a visit from his fiancée's father, who told him with a cold and embarrassed air that Sarah couldn't wait for the return of a soldier, and that he was going to look for another husband for her. When poor David had joined his regiment and was beginning to train for service, he received sad and deplorable news from his family: Mordecai Blum's debtors, taking advantage in bad faith of the tyrannical provisions of the imperial decree against the Jews, refused to pay what they owed him, until he had proved to have given the full amount of the bonds they had subscribed for his benefit; and as this was materially impossible, Mordecai found himself in one day ruined from top to bottom. Not only that, his credit was lost; his creditors, who didn't need to prove anything because they weren't Jews, demanded what he owed them, and as he couldn't pay up straight away, he lost his head, went bankrupt and, as he had no business books, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment as a bank robber. What he had to suffer, no one ever knew, for Mordecai never complained; but dull pain, dull eyes and his hair turning white in a few days – these were the only signs of his despair, until one morning he was found dead on the fetid straw of his prison. His wife, Rebekah, had endured everything with religious resignation, and even managed to stifle her silent tears for the hour she was allowed to spend each day at the prison gate; but when she lost her husband, she gave herself over to cries of pain, threatening imprecations and fits of rage that soon showed all the symptoms of madness. Her madness became so violent that she was confined in a home for the insane, where God, having mercy on her, soon called her back to Himself.

"Nothing can describe David Blum's stupor when he received this fatal news in Spain, where he had followed his regiment. Locked in the iron circle of military service, he could not even give free rein to his righteous grief; he would have sacrificed his life to go and defend his father or console his mother, but the law chained him under the flag, and he was denied even the sad consolation of going to mourn at their graves. He cursed the Emperor, exhaled his rage in vain threats, and his hatred in useless imprecations, and in his eyes shone ceaselessly the dark fire of despair, at the same time as the fiery lava of vengeance bubbled in his heart as in a bed of fire. Soon he seemed dead to real life; he performed his service with exactitude, but mechanically; he went to fire and parade with the same inert indifference; a cruel memory had taken hold of his whole being, and life was no more for him than an intermittent lethargy. One day, however, at an inspection review, General G-uilleminot, struck by the young soldier's defeated look, asked the nearest officer why, and he replied scornfully: "He's an Alsatian Jew, a pretty bad soldier, without nerve or courage. At these words, the red rose to David's forehead, and he sat up briskly, convulsively clutching the hilt of his saber; but this flash of animation calmed immediately, and the orphan's pale face resumed its accustomed impassivity.

"From then on, nothing could disturb the leaden sleep that numbed David Blum's faculties; and when, four years later, he witnessed the burning of Moscow and the ruin of the Kremlin, his calm and indifference did not waver for a moment amid the thousand dangers that surrounded him. A few days later, on October 24, 1812, he found himself on the banks of the Louga river, with a retreating division of the French army, hotly pursued by the Russians under the command of Kutusoff, when the French general, seeing his division crushed by Russian artillery, ordered a hundred grenadiers to be thrown into a church overlooking the road. David was one of these hundred brave men, who crenellated the church and defended it so valiantly that five times, with their well-timed fire, they broke the enemy columns and gave the French division time to reassemble at the bottom of a ravine, where, with 18,000 men, it

resisted 50,000 Russians, whom it completely defeated. After this brilliant affair, General Guilleminot, who commanded the French division, was presented with those brave grenadiers who had not succumbed in the defense of the church, and to whom the day's success was owed. David was singled out for his intrepidity. "What's your name?" asked the general. – David Blum, an Alsatian Jew, who was singled out four years ago in Spain as a bad soldier. – You're a good man, David Blum, and I'm making you an officer. – Thank you, my general, I don't want anything; I fought because it was a question of the lives of my brothers in arms, but I did nothing for your emperor, who ruined, dishonored and destroyed my family...".

((A few weeks later, the routed French army was making its disastrous retreat to the Beresina, and cold and hunger were littering the icy countryside with the dead and dying, when Napoleon, stopping to warm himself by the fire of a bivouac, was astonished by the order and good composure maintained by this group of soldiers amidst the appalling disorder of the rest of the army. "His energy has sustained ours, his courage has saved us from Cossack skirmishes, and his prudence has always provided us with food and fire. – David Blum," said the Emperor, in that voice which made European thrones tremble, and which he knew, when he wanted to, how to make so soft and attractive, "David Blum, you are a good soldier, and your place is marked in the old guard; "Then, detaching the silver cross which adorned his general's uniform, he handed it to the Jewish soldier, who, fought by the old leaven of hatred which was fermenting within him, at the same time as he felt fascinated by the respectful awe which the Emperor's presence imbued in everyone, replied firmly, although his face revealed the strong emotions which were stirring him: "Sire, I am an Alsatian Jew, and can accept neither promotion nor decoration, for that would be to accept the taking of the blood of my family dishonored by the Vodieux decree of March 17th, – Ah! then he added briefly: "They've deceived me again on this point, but we'll see;" and a cloud spread over his features, a deep wrinkle furrowed his broad brow, and as if to shake off an unwelcome thought, he sprang onto his horse and galloped away, followed by his silent staff. David Blum remained standing, paying the military salute with one hand, and holding the legionnaire's cross the Emperor had given him with the other; his faculties were as if suspended, his head was in a confused buzz, his heart was beating violently, and when his comrades called him back to himself, it seemed as if he was emerging from a dream. A band of Cossacks appeared in the distance, and, after a desperate struggle in which the French detachment perished almost entirely, the wounded David was taken prisoner, and, as he had been in command of his small squad, was mistaken for the officer; It was to this misunderstanding that he owed his life and the awful experience of being taken back to Moscow, from where, after long torture, he was sent to Siberia. It was to a mine beyond the O lraais mountains, nine hundred leagues from Petersburg, that the unfortunate prisoner was taken to be subjected to the most barbaric treatment. On his descent into this anticipated tomb, he had to abdicate his name, Jewish Preponderance, II. 19 his homeland, his individuality, and his existence was divided between work and the knout. In this desert populated by a few hundred living people, all morally deceased, one does not live, one suffers. Here, the miner has no home, no family, no friends, only tears and snarls of rage; here, the exile holds on to the world only by the imperceptible thread of a memory that grows thinner every day; here, executioners and victims, bent under the same yoke, fall asleep next to each other in eternal slumber, and the desert that sees generations of exiles pass by never witnesses their return. David Blum lived twenty-eight years in this underground labor, twenty-eight years during which he had no regrets, no troubles, no despair, for his soul was bronzed with suffering, and his torn heart had long since been riddled with too many blows to be vulnerable to a new wound. One morning, he was told he was free; at first he didn't understand the word, which was scratched from his memory; then human instinct drove him, and he began to walk straight ahead. Where he was going, he didn't know; but he was so astonished to be able to walk alone, stop whenever he wanted, and see the sky at all

hours, that his heart felt flooded with ineffable joy. He blessed the rain, the wind and the cold, for for him it was all a rebirth of life... Alas! soon with reason, he regained a sense of all his ills! Poor ring, violently detached from the social chain, he shuddered at his isolation on earth, and for a moment thought of returning to the alternative of work and the knuckle which, for twenty-eight years, had taken the place of his existence. But the word France magically awakened his numb soul, and he crossed the whole of Europe with a courage that never wavered, his fortune being his traveling stick, the assistance of generous hearts his support, and the polar star called Patrie his guide.

"Finally, one morning in December 1840, he arrived in the village of his birth; he who had once been so handsome when he left Alsace, so proud then to breathe in the fresh life that his youth offered him in prospect, he returned with his back bent, his body thinned, his eyes extinguished and his step faltering. At first, he looked around in amazement, as someone said to him: "You've arrived," and yet he didn't recognize the village of yesteryear, nor his father's house, nor the walnut tree under which he used to shelter in stormy weather. Where was the pretty brook whose capricious course he had followed as a child? What has become of the green shutters that brightened up the pavilion opposite? And the garden, witness to his childhood games, and the flowers he used to pick for his fiancée Sarah? Alas, all that has disappeared, the village has become a small town, factories have sprung up, everything has changed, and David, for the first time in twenty-eight years, feels a tear wet his eyelid, a tear of regret for this golden past that has vanished in the breath of adversity. The population of the country was also much changed, the old had died and the young were strangers, the name of Blum was entirely forgotten and unknown, and David couldn't find a hand to press his own, and met only worried glances and suspicious faces. So he went to pray at his parents' graves, then headed for Paris, where the Emperor's funeral ceremony was being prepared, and where the old soldier hoped to meet some old brother-in-arms. By December 14, he had arrived in the capital, exhausted, cold and hungry, with no papers, no money, and no idea what to do with himself. 11 wandered for a long time through the streets of the big city, often rubbing shoulders with people who talked about the glories of the Empire, and who didn't care if, next to them, need was gnawing at one of the old instruments of this national glory. When night came, and he had no place to rest his head, he lay down on an icy stone in the shelter of a theater porch; and, as he was barely clothed, he suffered more from the cold than he had in Siberia. He couldn't sleep, and dark thoughts agitated his insomnia; what was he still doing down here? Why had his whole life been doomed to misfortune? Why was he surviving alone his father, his mother, his fiancée, his brothers-in-arms, his officers, and had no friends, no fortune, no work in the whole world, nothing to tie his soul to hope, nothing to support his body on earth? And all this because it had pleased a happy soldier one day to put the Alsatian Jews outside the law of nations; because, substituting arbitrariness for justice, he had robbed them of their fortune and their children at the same time; because, finally, this parricidal son of liberty seemed to have taken it upon himself to monopolize his mother's inheritance for his own benefit... At this moment, many cries of: Vive l'Empereur" ("Long live the Emperor!") struck David's ear, causing him to flinch like a traveller who has just stepped on a snake, which rears up with a hiss. It was the early-morning crowd heading for the Invalides to pay their last respects to the hero who had been their idol; the old soldier followed them and was seized with admiration at the sight of the imposing spectacle on the Champs-Élysées. Invited to the funeral feast, the Parisian population soon arrived in black masses, pouring in from every direction, and each avenue unceasingly threw out new phalanxes until a cordon of heads united the Tuileries to the Arc de l'Etoile; it was like a stormy sea where twenty overflowing rivers were rushing and roaring. All states, all classes were represented at this mournful solemnity; all recriminations, all hatreds against the great man seemed forgotten, and the great voice of history alone spoke over the tomb of this giant whom humanity could only measure when he lay lifeless. "This sublime spectacle revolutionized the ideas David Blum had hitherto nourished his resentment

with, and his heart was suddenly illuminated and opened to pity, like a horizon laden with dark clouds torn violently by a ray of sunlight. He remembered the emotion with which the Emperor had said these words to him: "They have deceived us again!" and, bowing before the great misfortune of the French hero, he offered him as a holocaust, along with forgiveness for the evils he had caused him to suffer, the oblivion of the hatred he had vowed to him, and he exclaimed, seized with a holy enthusiasm: "How did you fall from heaven, imperial star, resplendent with so much divine light! How did you die in exile, you who led kings to the edge, and peoples to the chain! Gigantic colossus, who wanted to cover the whole earth with your shadow, how did you let yourself compete for a few feet of the arid rock of Saint Helena! No, I no longer dare to complain about my life of pain and misfortune, because yours have exceeded what the human heart can bear. Like me, you have been robbed of your loved ones! like me, you have been chained to a distant land! like me, you return with a cold heart and a stiffened arm! and the great Emperor and the humble Jew meet for the last time on soil consecrated anew by liberty, tolerance and justice, for evil laws have but one day, liberty, tolerance and justice are eternal...

"At that moment, the city bells rang as if startled awake by the sound of cannon, the drums made their mournful roll, the bugles sounded their airy moans, and a distant voice, composed of a hundred thousand voices, cried out, "Here he is!" Beneath the Arc de l'Etoile, a giant of stone raised so that the Emperor's great shadow could rise to its full height beneath it, appeared the triumphal coffin with its girdle of maimed generals, its shining renown, its triple-colored banners covered with crepes, and its eagles with outstretched wings that seemed to take flight into eternity. What David Blum felt at this sight no one will attempt to paint; he fell to his knees and prayed. His soul was calmed by prayer, the hallucination of his mind relaxed, his body ceased to be sustained by the second life given by thought, and collapsed with fatigue and need; and, when the crowd had had enough of watching the procession pass by, they noticed the old soldier leaning lifelessly against one of the triumphal columns that adjoined the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile.

"The next day, a newspaper carried the following article:

"Among the accidents that occurred yesterday was a man with a miserable appearance and a strange face, who was found lying unconscious in the Ghamps-Elysées. It is not known whether he fell victim to "need, cold or crowd pressure. He was taken to the Beaujon hospital, but the care he received was useless, and he died last night after a few hours of agony. Today, this unknown being, on whom neither money nor papers were found, is to be laid in state at the morgue. Only during his "agony, his clenched hand held violently pressed "against his chest a small package containing a "cross of the Legion of Honor bearing the effigy of Napoleon" and a printed paper so folded and worn, that we could "only decipher with difficulty these words: Decret im-"peral concernant les juifs, 17 mars ISOS185..." "

CHAPTER II

THE TURNING MOVEMENT OF THE JEWS

I. Difference between the action taken by the Jews against the Constituante and their tactics against Napoleon. - II. A line of exceptions to the decree. - III. The secret societies' counter-decree. - IV. The flogging of events. Horrible and barbaric conduct of the Polish Jews after the passage of the Beresina. - V. At the end of the ten years.

I

Let's go back to the main lines of Jewish history, to the historical milieu that the previous anecdote has somewhat upset.

The year is 1808. The harsh decree against the Jews was issued in March. This was the year when Napoleon no longer respected the majesty of the Holy See, and his armies crossed the Pyrenees to invade Spain.

The anecdote, an echo of true feelings, showed Jewish impassivity in the midst of the suffering caused

by the application of the decree. This chapter will recount the struggle waged by the sons of Israel, who have acquired a taste for French liberty, against the decree and its author.

It was a skilful struggle.

What did they do? Attack the decree head-on? They wouldn't dare; they wouldn't risk it. They would have been tumbled, with a wave of the hand, back into their old cottages.

Flexible and fertile in expedients, their tactics against Napoleon are diametrically opposed to the action they took against the Constituante twenty years earlier. The latter had been attacked head-on: with the Emperor, it would be a turning point.

You'll recall the table we drew of the fourteen assaults delivered by Jewish tenacity to the National Assembly, from 1789 to 1791, to demand, in the name of Human Rights, civil emancipation. We present the episode of the last assault:

"It must be admitted that they were tenacious, and above all good logicians. Tenacious, because in the space of two years, i.e. during the entire duration of the Constituante, the question of their emancipation had been presented fourteen times by them, dismissed and postponed fourteen times by the legislators, and they were still there, to present it to them a fifteenth time on the eve of the dissolution of the Assembly. Good logicians, because they demanded that we draw from the Declaration of Rights the logical consequences we didn't want to see there.

"We had reached the eve of the closing of the Constituent Assembly. It was the penultimate session. There was no more time to lose, no more reprieve to accept. Duport rose and demanded, in the name of Human Rights, the emancipation of the Jews. Régnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély cut short all contradiction, saying: "I ask that all those who will speak against this proposal be called to order, for it is the Cons-"titution itself that they will be fighting."

"When a body of troops retreats, if we manage to throw it on an obstacle to destroy it or force it to surrender, we say, in war terms, that it is cornered. This was the predicament of the Constituante, at the advanced hour of its retreat. It was faced with a choice: either lay down its arms to the Jews, or destroy the Constitution, its work, which for the Constituante meant destroying itself in the eyes of history. It was cornered.

"The famous Declaration of the Rights of Man had become a dead end, a cul-de-sac. The Assembly remained silent in the face of Régnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély's apostrophe. Victory remained with the Jews L"

So, after fourteen attempts to get the Assemblée Constituante to rule on their emancipation, fourteen refusals and fourteen defeats, on the fifteenth attempt, the Jews remained the masters 186 187.

Such a frontal attack was absolutely impossible with Napoleon. In any case, the difficulty of winning is no longer the same. With the Constituante, it was a deduction it did not want to draw from a principle it had laid down; with Napoleon, it was a brutal fact to be rectified. In the first case, we had to deal with logic; in the second, we encountered the hilt of a sabre and the grey frock coat...

The cautious gentry of Palestine came to a halt by means of the turning movement: to turn the difficulty, i.e. to evade it!

II

The first expedients used to evade it were exceptions to the decree.

The Jewish historian Halévy says with affected disdain, as if he wanted to give the impression and erase from history the fear felt by his co-religionists: "Moreover, the decree had scarcely been issued for a year, when several successively appeared, freeing from its provisions the Jews of one department, then those of another, so that its application was soon reduced to the Israelites of Alsace alone L " This sentence is nothing but bluster, here is the truth:

Napoleon begged. Humbly and imploringly, the Hebrews of the Empire successively came to request

exceptions to the decree. As a prince who wanted to show himself debonair, Napoleon granted them. Use then formed a line of exceptions:

1 Léon Halévy, *Histoire des juifs modernes*.

In 1808, the Emperor freed the Israelites from the
lites:

from the Seine (April 6),

the Mediterranean (June 16),

Basses-Pyrénées (July 22).

In 1810, he granted the same favor to Israelites :

Alpes-Maritimes ' Aude ,

Doubs Haute-Garonne

Hérault

Marengo [

Pô I

de Seine-et-Oise >

de Stura

de la Doire I

de la Seine 1

Vosges

du Gard I

de Gênes j

Bouches-du-Rhône *

In 1811, he extended emancipation to the Israelites:

Rome

Rhône

Montenotte des Forêts

Thus, by 1811, twenty-two departments of the Empire had already been freed from the decree of March 17, 1808 L It is fair to acknowledge that the Israelites were making efforts to earn their way back into common law. The Minister of the Interior pointed this out to the Emperor: "The regeneration of the Israelites is noticeable; they are eager to merit Your Majesty's paternal kindness, and are seeking to make themselves worthy of an exception to the provisions of the decree¹⁸⁸ 189." Of the sixty-eight departments of the Empire inhabited by Israelites, forty-four were still subject to the 1808 decree in 1811. The Jews had therefore not reformed in all departments. Nevertheless, even in those departments, the situation had improved. Corruption was no longer so widespread; all the arrondissements and communes of a region were no longer uniformly squeezed by the excesses of usurers, and if it was not yet possible to remove the entire department from the application of the decree, it was at least possible to restore freedom to some of its parts. Napoleon therefore allowed his Minister of the Interior to grant individual towns exceptions to the 1808 ordinance. The Minister of the Interior would have liked the Emperor to do even more, and to reach out from the towns to the individuals themselves. But Napoleon never agreed to go that far. Exceptions notwithstanding, the legislator did not banter about the application of his decree, despite what the historian Halévy wrote with rather light-hearted disdain. The lion may have retracted his claws, but he was in no mood to let them be trimmed. t

On July 9, 1812, the first signs of joy returned to Jewish homes. Compulsory military service for all Israelite conscripts, without allowing them to be replaced under any circumstances, was mitigated. On the report of the Duc de Feltre, Minister of War, Israelites were authorized to be replaced by their co-religionists.

All these exceptions had already made up for the difficulty of the terrible decree. The victory of patience was pronounced for the Jews. So far, nothing but legitimate.

III

But here's the culpability: they went to the secret societies for help.

It is beyond dispute today that the Masonic societies had a hand in Napoleon's reverses, after having helped him in his triumphs. During the first part of his reign, up to 1809, Napoleon encountered energetic support from Masonic Lodges in all the countries he invaded, and more than once his military genius was aided by the "Masonic" and "Masonic" societies.

1 Arch. nat., AF, IV, 630, dr 5383, n° 12. Report by the Min. delà guerre, Duc de Béltre, addressed to Napoleon on June 10, 1812, approved by the Emperor on July 9, 1812.

Then the Lodges withdrew from him, when they understood that the imperial despotism was concentrated entirely in personal ambition and family interests, and that Masonry had only been an instrument for him. From that moment on, the fight against the unfaithful Caesar 190 191 was decided; the Tugendbund was its expression 192 : a German word meaning bond of virtue.

The Jews had been the secret societies' accomplices in Napoleon's triumphs: "In Frankfurt and throughout Germany," recounts an illustrious historian, "the Jews acclaimed him as the Messiah, so aware were they of the overthrow of the Christian social edifice that was being accomplished by his arms¹⁹³".

Were they not accomplices of the same secret societies, when the latter turned against their idol?

Indeed:

There is a coincidence of dates:

Napoleon's decree against the Jews, the decree that so infuriated them, described by them as "infamous," is from 1808;

And the secret societies' decree declaring Napoleon abandoned was issued in 1809 194.

This coincidence of dates can be explained by the coincidence of grudges:

"He deceived us!" we shouted feverishly in the Lodges;

"How could he have kept his word to the Jews?" wrote the Jewish historian Graetz h on behalf of his co-religionists.

As clever and prudent people, the Jews charged the Lodges with their grudges and reprisals. This was not the first time that Lodges and Jews had met hand in hand. When the Constituent Assembly, in 1790-1791, delayed and almost refused to promulgate the decree of emancipation in favor of the Israelites, the latter turned to the Lodges, which sent the suburbs of Paris to support their Jewish friends at the Assembly 195 196; now that it was a question not of having a decree of exception brought back (we wouldn't dare!) but of punishing it, the Lodges again showed themselves to be of good composition.

This explains the historical sequence:

In 1808, Napoleon's decree and the anger of the Jews;

In 1809, the Lodges' decree and the about-face against Napoleon.

IV

Strong as he was, Napoleon would have been almost indifferent to being abandoned by the secret societies, had not a more formidable abandonment shaken his throne: that of God.

The Emperor had dared to lay a hand on the Lord's anointed. One day - it was the very day of the Battle of Wagram - the Pope was taken from his palace on the Quirinal by General Radet; a carriage awaited downstairs, its blinds nailed shut and its doors locked; then, without wasting a minute, the august and invincible old man was dragged to Florence, Turin, Grenoble, Valence and finally Savona. Bitterly saddened, Pius VII replied to Napoleon, who threatened to strip him of his tiara if he did not bend to his will: I place these threats at the foot of the Cross, and abandon to God the care of avenging a

cause, which is his own,

The Emperor was under the weight of excommunication. On learning that he had been excommunicated by the Pope for seizing the States of the Church, he mockingly exclaimed: Does he think that his excommunication will make my soldiers 197 drop their weapons?

Heaven had collected this challenge in the treasures of its wrath. It was the eve of the Russian campaign. To prove that God Himself had reserved the right to punish so much pride, taking this care away from the arms of men, victory was allowed to accompany the great army 1 to the walls of Moscow: Moscow, yet another of those fabulous names that had so captured Napoleon's imagination, like that of the Pyramids, like that of the St. Bernard! His eagles flew to the top of the Kremlin. Then the man who was to be scourged before Europe, as Heliodorus had been before Jerusalem, was abandoned to the angry, conspiring elements.

1 He had an army admirable for its bearing and overall strength, one hundred and sixty major generals, three hundred and forty brigadier generals and one hundred and ten aides-de-camp. Half of Europe supplied him with soldiers, and his will knew no bounds.

Here is the strength of the army he took to Russia:

60,000 Poles,
20,000 Saxons,
30,000 Austrians,
30,000 Bavarians,
22,000 Prussians,
20,000 Westphalians,
8,000 Württemberg,
8,000 from Baden,
4,000 from Darmstadt,
2,000 from Gotha and Weimar,
5,000 from Württemberg and Franconia,
5,000 from Mecklenburg and others,
20,000 Italians, including Neapolitans,
4,000 Spaniards and Portuguese,
10,000 Swiss,
250,000 Frenchmen,
In all, 498,000 men.

Napoleon had arranged for his vassal kings to meet in Dresden. Franz II of Austria, Frederick William of Prussia, the kings of Bavaria and Württemberg, Jerome, king of Westphalia, and the Grand Dukes of the Confederation were all gathered together, a dazzling array gravitating around this new sun.

Napoleon regarded them as his creatures, and said when kings were announced to him: "Let them wait" (Cantu, *Histoire universelle*, t. XVIII.).

Fire breaks out, lit by Rostopchine. Carried by the wind to all parts of the city, the fire became a deluge of flames. "Hospitals could not be preserved, so the wounded dragged themselves with effort to die out of the inferno. Soldiers, tired of putting out the fire, returned to their quarters, where they found nothing but coals. In three days, the city was reduced to ashes, with only the Kremlin left standing. The victorious army was reduced to camping around a burning city. In the rain-soaked countryside, the fires of the bivouacs were fuelled by paintings and precious furniture; officers and soldiers, torn and burnt, could be seen lying on cashmere shawls, Siberian pelisses and Persian carpets; silver crockery was strewn everywhere; but all these riches were no consolation for the suffering that hunger was causing them, and for that which they foresaw in the future.

The retreat from Russia began. Then came the great cold, which was not to produce disaster, but to bring it to a climax. "Snow began to fall, obliterating all traces of roads, so we had to walk at random, the gust of wind in our eyes, exposed at every moment to sink into the marshes. The unfortunate soldiers, suffocated by the wind and numbed by the cold, hit a stone or tree trunk, and fell, unable to get up again, and were soon covered by the snow.

"The rifles slipped from their stiffened hands, the extremities froze and gangrened; those who fell asleep never woke up again. If a few discovered a cleared path and set off hopefully, the peasants and Cossacks in ambush fell on them with fury, leaving them to expire slowly on the snow. The horses, few in number and not shod with ice shoes, slid across the hardened ground; they broke the ice to find some water, and gnawed at the frozen bark of the trees. When they finally collapsed from exhaustion, their throats were hastily slit to feed on their flesh and warm their hands and feet in their throbbing entrails.

"Every bivouac was turned into a graveyard by the lack of fire; the soldiers lay down with their packs on their backs and the riders with their bridles slung over their arms: often they held each other in their arms to provide each other with a little warmth; but often too, the next morning, they found only a corpse near them, and left it without pitying its fate; for it had ceased to suffer. If any wood was seen, the carefully preserved pot was put on the fire, and powder replaced salt to season a handful of rye flour or a piece of horse. A fierce egoism replaced the generosity that is the soldier's prerogative, and everyone thought only of themselves, going so far as to fight, sword in hand, over a miserable crust of bread, a bale of straw or a bundle of sticks. When a comrade fell, no hand was stretched out; when another fell, before he had frozen and stiffened, the blanket covering him was torn from his shoulders, to be put on again while still warm. It was in vain that those who lay on the icy ground, fallen from exhaustion or wounded, pressed the knees of their brothers-in-arms, begging them, in the name of their parents, of their fatherland, not to abandon them; then, when the drum beat the march, they dragged themselves along the ground with howls, pointing at the Cossacks who were coming, imploring as a last service a shot from their rifle, so as not to fall into the power of these barbarians h"

Excommunicated by the Pope, Napoleon mockingly exclaimed: Does he think that his excommunication will make my soldiers drop their weapons? An angry messenger, the cold had accepted, on God's behalf, the mocking challenge: the rifles escaped from their stiffened hands...

It is at this dismal moment that history places a horrible episode whose shame has reflected on the name of Israel. It is linked to the dreadful scene of the passage of the Beresina, when, for the survivors, the horror was growing with every step and the cold had increased still further, the thermometer having dropped to 35 degrees. Comte de Ségur, a witness, speaks:

"Twenty thousand French remained in Wilna, sick, wounded and exhausted. To tell the truth, the Lithuanians, whom we had abandoned after compromising them so much, collected and rescued some of them; but the Jews, whom we had protected, repulsed the others. They did much more. The sight of so much pain irritated their greed. However, if their infamous avarice, speculating on our miseries, had been content to sell small amounts of relief at the weight of gold, history would disdain to sully its pages with this disgusting detail; but that they lured our wounded victims into their homes to strip them bare, and then, in full view of the Russians, threw these naked, dying victims through the doors and windows of their houses; that they mercilessly left them there to freeze to death; that even these vile barbarians made a point of torturing them in the eyes of the Russians : such horrible crimes must be denounced for centuries to come! Now that our hands are powerless, it may be that our indignation against these monsters is their only punishment on this earth; but at last the murderers will one day join the victims, and there, no doubt, in the justice of heaven, we will find our vengeance L "

The witness's explosion of pain and indignation has somehow frozen over, in its turn, to subsist: who doesn't share it? who isn't with him? We ourselves! We see the wounded agonizing, drawn and gathered

in these cruel dwellings, stripped naked by these rapacious hands, then thrown back into the terrible cold through doors and windows: people of Israel, keep, oh! keep this horrible memory, for the day of your tears and your expiations! Vengeance, inscribed in heaven, is handed over to charity on earth!...

1 Le comte de Ségur, quoted by Roiirbacher, *Histoire de l'Église*, t. XXVIII, p. 155. – Dareste, *Histoire de France*, t. VIII, p. 518 – The anecdote in the previous chapter in no way diminishes this account: one is a short story, the other is the burin of history.

Alongside the barbaric actions of the Jews, we must also place, as a conclusion to the appalling Russian campaign, the equally barbaric language of Napoleon. Before boarding the sleigh that took him away from the remains of his unfortunate army, he wrote the famous thirty-ninth bulletin, in which he informed an astonished Europe that his great army had been defeated by the cold. He ended with the words: "His Majesty's health has never been better,

"Let a million widows and lovers console themselves! he is doing well, and this man has not a word of compassion for the dead, not a word of consolation for the survivors!"

This is the bitter reflection of the historian Cantu h It is to be placed in the vicinity of the indignation against the Jews.

V

Let's anticipate events for a moment: it's March 17, 1818.

On this date, the old cock of the jewry laughed:

Ten years ago!

Napoleon was no longer in Europe: dead, without having left life;

His famous decree of March 17, 1808 resembled him: a dead letter, without having been removed from the *Bulletin des Lois**.

On the contrary, two mysterious existences, to which duration had been promised, repressed for a moment and compressed by the iron hand of the despot, had resumed the peaceful course of their destinies: the Pope had returned to Rome, and the people of Israel had returned to freedom. Napoleon had used his genius to discipline these two existences.

In the struggle between him and the Pope, the last word had remained with the Pope:

There are those returns where the views of Providence are transparent. Pius VII's last painful stop was Fontainebleau. There, the Emperor had showered him with outrages, even to the point of assigning him five paoli (2 fr. 75) a day. Now, in the same palace at Fontainebleau, he had to sign his abdication, and the sovereigns assigned him to the island of Elba... Pius VII entered Rome amid the indescribable enthusiasm of his subjects; at the Milvian Bridge, the crowd unhitched the horses of his carriage, and thirty young men from Rome's most distinguished families dragged it to St. Peter's; the Pope shed tears of joy: the emotion was immense, and was brought to its height when the venerable Pontiff, dismounting from his carriage, began to climb slowly, radiantly, the steps of his basilica; to the cheers-
1 "The Jews did not even ask for the revocation of the imperial decree which, for another four years, was to place them under a law of exception during the reign of the Constitutional Charter. They waited patiently for the term when this decree, suspending rights that could no longer be contested, was to fall to the acclaim of the whole of France." (Halévy, *Histoire des juifs*, p. 315-16).

Sobs mingled with lions. Just as the prisoner of Fontainebleau was returning to the Palace of the Popes, Napoleon was landing on the Isle of Elba, the only piece of land left to him; he was to leave it only to set Europe ablaze again for three months, and then, as much rejected by wives and mothers as taken away by jailers, to finish his life gloomily on a rock.

In the struggle between him and the sons of Israel, the last word had also remained with the Israelites; While the decree of March 17, 1808 fell like a useless barrier, this people retained all the positions it had conquered under the Revolution and the Empire:

The installation of Israelite citizens in the Declaration of the Rights of Man;
The installation of the Israelite cult in the Bulletin des Lois;
Installation of Israelite consistories in France's main cities;
The forthcoming installation of the rabbinate in the budget for cults;
The installation of Israelite names in the French language; – The installation of Israelite soldiers in the French language.

Installation of Israelite soldiers in the army;

And everywhere else, other installations were to follow.

So the Jews had resumed their forward march, imposed at first, then resolutely guarded and defended, through the events of France. But there was more. Now that they felt they had established themselves in strong, solid positions in France and neighboring countries, they too were going to think about empire. Indeed, during the Hundred Days, between Elba and Saint Helena, something quite singular had happened:

History records Charlemagne's melancholy and tears at the end of his life. He had been told that the Saxons and Normans, insulting his old age, had come to plunder the shores of his states. In vain had he built big, strong ships to punish them: the plunderers escaped on their light, elusive boats. One day, from the window of one of his palaces, he saw them with his own eyes sailing the North Sea: they had disappeared over the horizon, but his pensive eye was still following them. Charlemagne shed tears.

Don't great geniuses, like mothers, have touching perplexities?

Did Napoleon have his own? History tells us he did. He would have glimpsed the Cossack masters of Europe before the end of the century, and his eagle eyelid would have remained impassive. But if, on the North Sea where Charlemagne had followed the Norman barks with a melancholy gaze, the Emperor had glimpsed, on the evening of Waterloo, the boat of a Jew sailing to inaugurate an empire that was to succeed his own, perhaps he would have shed tears, for he knew not how to weep!...

CHAPTER 111

ROTHSCHILD AND WATERLOO

I. The house of Y Enseigne Rouge in Frankfurt's old Rue des Juifs: cradle and beginning of a financial dynasty. – II. Nathan Rothschild and the Duke of Wellington. – III. Mont Saint-Jean: the agony of the eagle under the eye of the vulture. – IV. The millionaire's boat through the storm and the stock market crash in London. – V. Judgment on the gain of thirty million. – VI. A new empire on the horizon.

I

Goethe described the appearance of Frankfurt's Judengasse, or Jewish quarter, as follows: "A narrow street, sad and dirty, with smoke-filled houses and a teeming population." There was a house there with a red sign (roth Schild). It was to this sign, this red shield, that the name of the family that was to become the most opulent in the universe was attached. A new kind of dynasty was to emerge from this humiliated place.

A certain Moïse Anselme (Moses Amschel), a dealer in curios and old medals, earned his living by peddling his modest ball on his back from village to village. He is remembered for a trait that epitomizes his characteristic caution. One day, along the way, he met one of his compatriots, a peddler like himself, but more fortunate than he, since he owned a donkey. On the kind offer of a donkey, Amschel Moses lightened his load and placed it on the pack-saddle. Arriving at the edge of a deep ravine, over which a rickety plank bridge had been thrown, he stopped the donkey, picked up his ball again, replying to his companion who taunted him: "Accidents sometimes happen in passages like this, and since this ball contains everything I own, you won't begrudge me my caution." He was well advised to be, for no sooner had the donkey and its driver entered the bridge than it collapsed under their double weight, dragging them into the abyss 198.

Mayer-Amschel, his son, was born in 1743. Destined by his parents to become a rabbi, he was sent to Fürth to take a course in Jewish theology, but his vocation failed him. His tastes led him to collect and deal in old medals and coins; he made friends with numismatists who appreciated his sagacity and judgment, and entered the Oppenheim banking house in Hanover as an employee. 11 remained there for several years, highly esteemed by the house's directors. Sober, thrifty and active, he set aside some money and set up on his own account, buying and selling medals and coins, adding to this trade, in which he was a master, that of objets d'art, precious metals and advances on deposits, until the day he was able to devote himself exclusively to banking operations.

It was he who bought the old house with the red sign in Frankfurt's Judengasse. On entering the house, he took the name Rothschild. Fortune signed his name.

He settled his wife, Gudula Schnappe, the mother of all the Rothschilds, of the five modern-day Croesus. Wasn't the humble Jewess to be a counterpart to Marie-Lætitia Ramolino, the mother of the family of kings named Napoleon? Let us say in passing that she never consented to leave the house of F Enseigne rouge for a more brilliant sojourn: she lived there until 1849, when she died quietly in her ninety-sixth year.

Mayer-Anselme Rothschild's reputation for skill was matched by his rare integrity. He was known as the honest Jew. He won the confidence of William IX, Landgrave or Elector of Hesse-Cassel. This sovereign had built up a treasure trove of gold and precious stones. In 1806, the great debacle of the little German princes occurred: their principalities were invaded on all sides by Napoleon's armies. William IX received news of the invasion of his small states, and hastily summoned Mayer-Anselme to his palace in secret. The greatness of the House of Rothschild dates from this meeting and its aftermath.

The precise details were little known. The memoirs of a witness, a contemporary, General Baron de Marbot, have shed some light:

"Forced to leave Cassel in a hurry to take refuge in England, the Elector of Hesse, who was considered the richest capitalist in Europe, was unable to take his entire treasury with him, so he summoned a Jew from Frankfurt, named Éothschild, a third-rate banker of little note, but known for the scrupulous regularity with which he practiced his religion, which determined the Elector to entrust him with fifteen million in cash. The interest on this money was to belong to the banker, who would only be required to return the capital.

"When the palace at Cassel was occupied by our troops, the agents of the French Treasury seized considerable valuables, especially paintings, but no money was found. It seemed impossible, however, that in his hasty flight, the Elector had removed his entire immense fortune. Since, according to the so-called laws of war, capital and income from valuables found in enemy territory rightfully belong to the victor, people wanted to know what had become of the Kassel treasure. The information received indicated that before his departure, the Elector had spent a whole day with the Jew Rothschild, so an imperial commission went to his home, where the cash register and records were examined in detail. But it was all in vain: no trace was found of the deposit made by the Elector. Threats and intimidation were unsuccessful, so that the Commission, convinced that no worldly interest would induce a man as religious as Rothschild to perjure himself, decided to go to Rothschild's house.

Rothschild to perjure himself, wanted to put him under oath. He refused. There was talk of arresting him, but the Emperor opposed this act of violence, deeming it ineffective. So they resorted to a less than honorable means. Unable to overcome the banker's resistance, it was hoped to win him over by the lure of gain: it was proposed that he would be allowed to keep half the treasury if he would hand over the other half to the French administration; the latter would give him a receipt for the whole amount, accompanied by a deed of seizure, proving that he had only yielded to force, which would protect him from any claims; but the Jew's probity once again made him reject this means, and, war-weary, he was

left in peace.

"The fifteen million thus remained in Rothschild's hands from 1806 until the fall of the Empire in 1814. By this time, the Elector had returned to his States, and the Frankfurt banker had returned to him exactly the deposit he had entrusted to him. Just imagine what a considerable sum of money must have produced, in the space of eight years, a capital of fifteen million in the hands of a Jewish banker from Frankfurt! The opulence of the Rothschild brothers dates from this period, and they owe to their father's probity the high financial position they now occupy in all civilized countries.

It was not the elderly Mayer Anselme who had the consolation of delivering the entrusted treasure into the hands of the Elector; this care was left to his son Nathan (in 1814). The faithful custodian had died on September 13.

1 Mémoires du général baron de Marbot, t. I, chap. xxxi. tembre 1812. Before he died, he had gathered around his bed his five sons, Anselm, Salomon, Nathan, James and Charles, and had said to them: Remain always faithful to the Law of Moses; - never separate; - do nothing without the advice of your mother; if you observe these three precepts that I give you, you will become rich among the richest, and the world will belong to you! One must agree that there was in these recommendations some shred of ancient patriarchal grandeur! The old Frankfurt man's predictions were about to come true. A financial dynasty had been founded.

II

On the death of the father, the five sons, while remaining united, spread out across the world: Salomon went to Vienna, Nathan went to London, James came to Paris, Charles took. Anselme, the eldest son, who bore his father's name, kept the house in Frankfurt.

Five Rothschilds thus held the five major financial markets of Europe. Strengthened by their union, their accumulated capital and their father's name, they were ready to take advantage of the precipitating events, the changes that the imminent and predicted fall of the Empire would bring. Sentinels of a new kind, they sent messages back and forth to each other, from their

1 The Rothschilds, by John Reeves. - Revue des Deux Mondes, 1888.

observatories, the watchword from the ancient ramparts of Jerusalem: Sentinel, what have you gathered tonight? Sentinel, what did you see during the night?

The London Rothschild was Nathan. It was he whom his father had entrusted with the task of returning the fifteen million euros entrusted to him to the Elector of Hesse. 11 had had them in his possession since 1806, in order to put them to good use: "My father had sent me these funds, of which I made such good use, that the prince later made me a present of all his wine and linen 199 200". This English Rothschild was by far the most original of the family. When he first settled in England and tried his luck on the London Stock Exchange, he was little noticed, "and the gray heads of the Stock Exchange veterans treated the Frankfurt banker's son with some disdain. But he had quickly won his place, when we saw him "in five" years return 2500 times his capital, "organize a special courier service, devote considerable sums to the purchase of carrier pigeons, multiply the means of sure and prompt information". The fall of the Empire and the Battle of Waterloo were to provide him with the decisive opportunity to inaugurate his financial supremacy 201 on the world's leading market.

Nathan Rothschild's friend was the Duke of Wellington. This friendship dated back to the Spanish War. The British government, greatly embarrassed to send the Duke of Wellington the funds he needed on a regular basis, had turned to the House of Rothschild. It did so punctually, inaugurating a neutrality that consisted in supplying gold to those who crossed swords. The poet said:

De peur d'endosser la cuirasse, Tu sers avec fidélité Une damoiselle de glace Qu'on appelle Neutralité^,
In the House of Rothschild, the damsel was golden...

This intermediary mission earned the opulent house £1,200,000 (30 million) in eight years, and created

a close relationship between the Duke of Wellington and Nathan Rothschild.

Europe had been breathing since Napoleon was relegated to File d'Elbe: it was England's triumph.

Suddenly, like a thunderclap in a serene sky, came the news of the Emperor's landing at Juan Gulf, his rapid march on Paris and the flight of the Bourbons. Europe was disconcerted, and the London market was shaken.

Shortly afterwards, the Duke of Wellington came to Belgium to take command of the English forces; and Nathan Rothschild, his friend, understanding that the fate of Europe would depend on the first battle, and relying little on the sagacity of his correspondents, left London and arrived in Brussels. He then followed the Duke of Wellington's staff to Waterloo.

1 Maynard.

III

The eagle, "having flown, from steeple to steeple, to the towers of Notre-Dame", had come to stand on a tree on the Waterloo field;

Opposite, on a ruin, watched a vulture.

The eagle's melancholy tree is not entirely fiction. A contemporary of that solemn day seems to have leaned against it; Chateaubriand wrote: "We found ourselves in front of a poplar planted at the corner of a hop field; we crossed the path, and leaned upright against the trunk of the tree, our faces turned towards Brussels. A southerly wind blew in, and we heard the sound of artillery fire more clearly. This great battle, as yet unnamed, whose echoes we listened to at the foot of a poplar tree, and whose unknown funeral a village clock had just sounded, was the battle of Waterloo!

"A silent and solitary listener to the tremendous decree of destiny, we would have been less moved if we had been in the fray: the peril, the fire, the crush of death would not have given us time to meditate; but alone under a tree, in the Ghent countryside, like the shepherd of the flocks that grazed around us, the weight of reflection weighed down on us. What was this battle? Was it definitive? Was Napoleon there in person? Was the world, like Christ's robe, thrown into the fray? Success or defeat for one army or another, what would be the consequence of the event for the people, freedom or slavery? But what blood was being shed? Wasn't every sound that reached our ears the last gasp of a Frenchman? Was this a new Crécy, a new Poitiers, a new d'Azincourt, to be enjoyed by France's most implacable enemies? If they triumphed, was not our glory lost? If Napoleon prevailed, what would become of liberty 202?"

Napoleon was there in person. He had once again entrusted his fortune to the battlefields, to acquire the right to wield any power he wished. The sovereigns, meeting in Vienna, had put a price on his head, as in barbaric times, by taxing it at two million. Three armies, whose strength must have exceeded eight hundred thousand men, had set out to crush him under their weight: the English, under Wellington; the Austrians, commanded by Schwarzenberg; and the Prussians, under Blücher. But Napoleon was still the genius of battles; he had just inflicted enormous losses on Blücher in front of Fleurus, at the village of Ligny; and forty-eight hours later, eagle with the last impetuous flight, he attacked Wellington at Mont Saint-Jean, near Waterloo.

But the eagle was also his old guard. Against the sovereigns who had so strangely excluded him from the laws of humanity by putting a price on his head, his soldiers thought only of shedding their blood one last time to defend him. On his return from Elba, he had said to them, giving them back their eagles, and presenting the small battalion that had accompanied him to his island: "Soldiers! here are the officers of the battalion that accompanied me in my misfortune: they are all my friends; they were dear to my heart. Every time I saw them, they represented the different regiments of the army. In these six hundred brave men, there are men from all the regiments; all of them reminded me of those great days whose memory is so dear to me: for all of them are covered with honorable scars received at those memorable battles. In loving them, I was loving all of you, soldiers of the French army! They bring you these eagles;

let them serve as a rallying point; by giving them to the guard, I give them to the whole army; treachery and unfortunate circumstances had covered them with a mournful veil; but, thanks to the French people and to you, they reappear resplendent in all their glory. Swear that they will always be there, wherever the interests of the fatherland may call them! May traitors and those who would invade our territory never be able to look upon them!

A general shudder in the ranks of the guard had been the response of devotion to the death: this devotion had come to keep its word at Waterloo.

This is the eagle î

Opposite, looked the vulture.

We're not the ones inflicting this appellation on Nathan Rothschild, we're merely recounting it. In a brochure we have before us, dated 1846, we find this painful passage: "Corruption breeds worms. Corpses attract vultures. Great catastrophes bring agioteurs to life. The destinies of Europe were to be decided at Mont-Saint-Jean. The vulture had followed the eagle's trail. Nathan Rothschild was in Belgium, his eyes fixed on Waterloo²⁰³.

In these few lines, what a portrait! Neither gold brocaded coat nor titles of nobility will ever correct the physiognomy of this Nathan, who came as a speculator from this solemn disaster. Natural history books characterize I vulture by its head-flush eyes: what head-flush eyes the anxiety of gain must have given the financier, who followed the Duke of Wellington's staff!

Then came the eagle's final flight, and its agony.

At Mont Saint-Jean, Wellington had fortified himself in a defensive position, highly favorable to cold British courage.

Seeing him leaning against a forest with almost no exit, the Emperor calculated that he could inflict a disaster on him, and despite the fatigue of his soldiers and the terrible mud, he could not resist.

Separated from the English by a small valley, over which his heavy artillery blasted them, he charged Ney with crossing this gap and breaking through their center. The slopes were cleared; Ney established himself on the opposite edge. With cannons and fresh troops, the battle was won.

But in trying to follow him, the guns got bogged down at the foot of the heights, and at the same time the reserves were forced to face thirty thousand Prussians who had suddenly appeared on the right. This was Blücher's vanguard, commanded by Bulow.

Despite these accidents, the French held their ground on the plateau, and Wellington's efforts only succeeded in delaying his defeat until 7 p.m.. He thought he had lost, when suddenly a vast rumor swept across the battlefield.

What did this rumour bring?

After defeating Blücher at Ligny, Napoleon had instructed Grouchy to keep an eye on him and prevent him from passing, while he himself went to attack Wellington at Mont Saint-Jean. Now, in the middle of the day, the Prussian advance guard had come to the aid of the English, and had passed through. And towards evening, Blücher himself, having also passed through, presented himself with the rest of his forces on the Waterloo battlefield.

"Grouchy at last, but just in time!" said the exhausted braves of the French army to each other. A dreadful disappointment, unparalleled in the history of combat!

These brave men are exhausted, and Blücher's troops are on their way.

1 The English defended Grouchy against Napoleon. "The Emperor let the Prussians escape him after their defeat at Ligny, and gave the wrong direction to Marshal Grouchy, who was in charge of pursuing them with 33,000 men. As a result of this ill-ordered move, Grouchy, while fighting at Waterloo, was at Wavre, where he put up a useless fight against Thielemann's Prussian corps, leaving Blücher free to come to Wellington's aid. At every moment during these days, Napoleon showed himself careless,

inactive, unapproachable and more like a Darius than an Alexander." (Seeley, Histoire de Napoléon 1[^].) are fresh. A new battle at 8 p.m. has become impossible: they're throwing each other back. It was no longer a fight, but a massacre in a terrible rout.

The guard, however, remained impassive. It has formed itself into several squares; with it, the eagle will know how to die! "Around this immobile phalanx, the overflow of fugitives swept everything along, amid streams of dust, burning smoke and machine-gun fire, in darkness criss-crossed by cone-grenade rockets, amid the roar of three hundred artillery pieces and the precipitous gallop of twenty-five thousand horses: it was like the final summary of all the battles of the empire. Twice the French shouted: Victory! Twice their cries were silenced by the pressure of the enemy columns. A few wounded grenadiers, in the midst of forty thousand dead, a hundred thousand bloody cannonballs, cooled and conglomerated at their feet, stand leaning on their muskets, bayonets broken, cannon unloaded. Not far from them, *Yhomme des batailles* (Man of Battles) sat aside, staring at the last cannon shot he was to hear in his life.

He wondered whether he wouldn't enter a square of his guard to succumb with them: his generals took him away by force.

Let's return to other anxieties, those of *Yhomme du gain*:

Nathan Rothschild mingles with the Duke's staff

1 Chateaubriand, *Congrès de Vérone*. de Wellington. "Throughout that memorable day of June 18, he never left the field, anxiously questioning Pozzo di Borgo, General Alava, Baron Vincent and Baron Müffling, moving with them from fear to hope, seeing everything compromised when Napoleon hurled this mass of twenty thousand cavalymen, the most battle-hardened and fearsome in Europe, against the English squares; believing everything lost when the Guard climbed the Mont-Saint-Jean ravine, arms drawn. On this great green carpet where the destinies of Europe were played out, his ruin or fortune was also at stake. His star won out; he saw the invincible column oscillate, under the repeated discharges of two hundred artillery pieces, like an immense snake struck on the head, and felt all was saved when Blücher's vanguard emerged from the defiles of Saint-Lambert h".

Spurring on his horse, he rode back to Brussels one of the first, threw himself into his post-chair and arrived in Ostend on the morning of June 19.

IV

The sea is terrible.

No fisherman wanted to risk the crossing. In vain, Rothschild offered 500-600-800-1000 francs:

i The Rothschilds, by John Reeves. - *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1888.

no one dared accept. But is greed insurmountable? Finally, one of them agrees to carry the millionaire across the Straits, for a sum of 2,000 francs, which Nathan counts to his wife, the poor man doubting he will ever see his cabin and his companion again!

The boat pulls away.

Offshore, the storm calmed. Never was the proverb that Fortune is with the bold more fully applied.

Strange barque, you may well remind us, by your happy audacity, of Caesar's: but don't you more aptly recall, on this northern sea, the Norman barque that made Charlemagne weep?

That same evening, Nathan Rothschild landed at Dover. "He was exhausted, but managed to get himself some post horses. The next day, he was found in his usual place, leaning sideways against one of the columns of the Stock Exchange, his face as pale and defeated as that of a man who has just suffered a terrible blow. Dismay and stupor reigned at the Stock Exchange, and Rothschild's dejection was hardly likely to reassure anyone. People were watching him, exchanging meaningful glances and predicting disastrous news. Didn't we know that he was arriving from the Continent and that his agents were selling? In the vast, silent room, occasionally shaken by noisy clamors, speculators wandered like lost

souls, discussing in hushed tones the slumped attitude of the great financier. It was all the worse when the rumor spread that a friend of Rothschild's said he had heard from him that Blücher, with his one hundred and seventeen thousand Prussians, had suffered a terrible defeat on June 16th and 17th at Ligny, and that Wellington, reduced to a handful of soldiers, could not hope to stand up to the victorious Napoleon, now free to dispose of all his forces. These rumors spread like wildfire through the city. Funds dropped even further, and the game was considered lost.

"However, a few fools still seemed to be holding out, for there were occasional reports of major purchases, followed by lulls. These were attributed to orders from outside, given the day before by ill-informed speculators; they occurred when discouragement became more pronounced, intermittent and as if at random.

"That day, and the morning of the following day, passed like that. Only in the afternoon did the news of the Allied victory break. Nathan himself, his face beaming, confirmed it to anyone who would listen. The stock market leapt to its highest prices. People pitied Rothschild; they guessed at his losses; they didn't know that, if he had had his known brokers sell, he had had secret agents buy on a much larger scale, and that, far from making a loss, he was making over a million pounds sterling in profit²⁰⁴."

A thirty-million-franc haul: the North Sea had never been so rich in fish!

V

What are we to make of such a gain? And what impression has it left on people's minds?

From a moral point of view, there seem to be five things to consider about this lucre from Waterloo:

The company,

The odds,

The financial operation,

Rothschild's silence on the outcome of the battle,

the feintness with which he acted.

The business? – It was, for him, full of fatigue and danger.

The chances? – They were uncertain at first, since no boatman was willing to steer the frail craft, and he risked being swallowed up by the roaring sea.

The financial operation? – It was permitted, given that the London Stock Exchange had existed since 1571, inaugurated by Elizabeth as the Royal Exchange. Many bankers and financiers gave him the example of operations.

His silence on the outcome of the battle of Waterloo – he was not obliged to leave it, since he was a private individual with no official role, and no responsibility for informing the public.

But the feint with which he acted? – Ah, that's the black line on the thirty-million-dollar lucre.

When we saw Rothschild's dejected, mournful face in the Stock Exchange, and listened to his account of Blücher's defeat at Ligny, we were in a hurry to sell and get rid of our shares: wouldn't we have kept them without this face, without this account? Some say: It's probable. Others say: The bad news, brought by official couriers and confirmed by statesmen, was enough to cause the market to collapse.

They add: Rothschild was not required to put a different face on known events, nor to bring any other accounts than those read in the official gazette. The best thing for the Israelite would certainly have been to keep himself locked up at home, while having secret agents buy the stocks that were falling under the impression of the debacle, but without increasing and pressing the debacle by his slumped presence and gloomy air.

Following this moral investigation, should we say that Waterloo's lucre falls under Mabillon's sentence:

Que les fortunes énormes et mal acquises sont un scandale public et révoltant?

Opinions will undoubtedly be divided in a superficial world. But the sentiment in favor of Nathan

Rothschild will hardly be able to explain or dispel the painful impression that has remained in people's

minds, and of which we report only the most respectful echo:

"Impossible to see a fortune whose origin is more honorable (the deposit entrusted by the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel). But a river, clear at its source and free of mire, does not always roll towards its mouth in such limpid streams... The day after the Battle of Waterloo, Nathan Rothschild carried out a thirty-million-dollar haul, without any trouble or remorse¹.

Moved by this deviation, even more than by the unfavorable interpretations, the opulent family would later strive to recall the clarity of its source and repel the mire, by digging, in the midst of its colossal fortune, a superb bed for charity:

Christian morality would inspire even better!...

VI.

M. de Chateaubriand, recounting the talks of high officials after the events we have just recounted, characterized the power of one of them with this sentence:

"Le Maître des rois repartit: Il faut savoir si on lui en laisseera le temps 205 206!"

It would seem, from the majesty of the qualifier and the smugness of the reply, that the writer is taking us back to the episode of Napoleon in Dresden, when, dictating the law to Europe, he was surrounded by a full court of kings. Make no mistake: it was Rothschild.

Chateaubriand's pen made no mistake when he wrote: "the master of kings".

Indeed, on the very evening that Napoleon's empire ended and disappeared, another was beginning to appear on the horizon. It would bear no resemblance whatsoever to all those that had preceded it. As early as 1815, the name borrowed from X, the red sign, was already shining like that of a sovereign house: the master of kings was announcing himself!

The same means that Napoleon used to introduce and establish his dynasty, Rothschild would also use, in a necessarily Hebraic form:

Napoleon entered the family of kings as a crowned soldier, with arms and baggage; his marriage was a conquest. - Rothschild will enter, not through the bridal chamber, but through the Treasury room; and old Europe will be no less stunned or silent for it.

Napoleon had imagined making kings. Didn't he give thrones to all his brothers, "in order to create," he said, "points of support and centers of correspondence for the great Empire"? - The House of Rothschild was soon established and enthroned in five European capitals: Frankfurt, London, Vienna, Naples and Paris. With enormous amounts of capital at their disposal, the five brothers set up correspondence offices in every corner of Europe. They were informed of the slightest fluctuations in public funds. Their operations were shrouded in the most impenetrable secrecy. Gold flows into their coffers like an ever-increasing tide. From one end of the continent to the other, kings shower them with honors.

Napoleon used to say: "Where's Drouot? for the artillery; "Where's Murat? for the cavalry. - Kings and governments will say: "Where is Rothschild? This is the beginning of a coalition of capital, far more powerful than that of armies. Conquerors of a new kind, capital is marching more surely to supremacy than Caesar's sword.

A strange and unusual empire! Only the Church, passing by Red Intelligence, will salute with the pride with which the first Christians, in the arenas, accompanied their salute to Caesar: Ave, Cæsar, te judicaturi salutantA

The ancient metropolis of Notre-Dame de Paris, which saw the crowning of the Caesar of the eagles, also heard this proud and moving peroration, where prophecy mingles with history:

"When the Emperor Julian was attacking Christianity with that ruse of war and violence which bears his name, and absent from the empire he had gone to seek in battles the consecration of a power and popularity which were, in his mind, to complete the ruin of Jesus Christ, one of his familiars, the rhetorician Libanius, meeting a Christian, asked him, in derision and with all the insult of an already

sure success, what the Galilean was doing; the Christian replied: He's making a coffin. Some time later, Libanius delivered Julian's funeral oration before his battered body and fading power. What the Galilean did then,

1 The gladiators had always said, in their salute to Caesar: Te morituri..., the Christians proudly substituted: Te judicaturi... !

he still does, whatever the weapon or the pride opposed to his cross. It would take a long time to deduce all the famous examples, but we have a few that touch us closely, and by which Jesus Christ, at the end of the ages, has confirmed to us the worthlessness of his enemies. Thus, when Voltaire rubbed his hands with joy towards the end of his life, telling his followers: "In twenty years, God will have a field day"; the Galilean was making a coffin: it was the coffin of the French monarchy. And so, when a power of another order, but derived in some degree from his own, held the Sovereign Pontiff in a captivity that presaged the fall, at least territorial, of the vicar of Jesus Christ, the Galilean made a coffin: it was the coffin of Saint Helena. And so it will always be, for the Galilean never does more than two things: to live on his own, and to bury everything that is not him h".

This enumeration calls for a complement, a request and an answer:

Does the Galilean prepare a coffin for the incalculable and preponderant fortune of the master of kings?

Yes, of course;

But may heaven grant that this coffin be the very sepulchre of Golgotha! for, all around, repentance and wealth could magnificently renew the most acclaimed of triumphs: that of the tears and perfumes of Magdalene, the rich Jewess of Magdala^{207 208}!

CHAPTER IV

WHAT NAPOLEON WAS, IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S BOOK

I. How the Book of God provides the elements for a fair assessment of Napoleon. – II. Providence had prepared for him the mission of a Cyrus: his work presents the outline. – III. But he came close to Herod the Great, in his passions and in his attacks. – IV. Bonaparte's apprehensions about his future. A great man and his work, in God's judgment.

I

Great men, living or dead, are always a source of regret. After studying Napoleon in his relationship with the people of Israel, we asked this extraordinary figure for permission to define and summarize him in a judgment in which the Bible would provide the elements of truth.

Many judgments have been passed on Napoleon.

Most of them, in principle, had a feeling of pagan antiquity. The parallel between Napoleon and Caesar, Annibal and Alexander has become commonplace. When he was alive, he himself called for it. An enthusiastic literature then pushed it to the extreme, finding "that the man whose name fills the world and who has seized time, space, imagination and thought, has his place marked above the Alexanders and Caesars L" It is beyond dispute, however, that as a warrior, Napoleon equals, and even surpasses, the greatest captains: never has a name gone as far as his, on the wing of lightning!

Two historians, one whose pen is a paintbrush, the other a scalpel, but the first of all, have judged him in himself, and thoroughly, in his person, his undertakings, his work: Thiers and Taine ^{209 210}. There is, as has been wittily said, the Napoleon of M. Thiers and the Napoleon of M. Taine. It is generally agreed that both have sinned against the rules of perspective, one by excess, the other by defect. Thiers, by exaggerating proportions, quite often transports his hero and the Napoleonic epic into the realm of legend. Taine, by examining too closely, and continually, the defects and small sides of the person, has dwarfed the great man.

We dare to hope that our assessment will be found just, because it isolates itself from all parties, and was inspired by the Book of God. When it comes to parallels, the Bible provides illuminating and stirring

types: there's a portrait gallery there that sheds light on all other physiognomies. What's more, it helps us avoid two pitfalls: the danger of exaggerating, and the danger of grating: for the Bible is also a beacon. We were full of respect for the person, admiration for the prodigies, sadness for the faults, compassion for the misfortunes. At atonement on the rock of St. Helena, Lamartine's lines came back to us: It is said that in the last days of his long agony, Before Eternity alone with his genius, His gaze towards heaven seemed to lift: The redemptive sign touched his fierce brow... And we even heard his mouth begin

A name he dared not finish.

Finish... It's the God who reigns and crowns; It's the God who punishes; It's the God who forgives: For heroes and us he has different weights.

How touching this last verse is, while seeming to contain an error! God will have no regard for the condition of individuals: St. Paul declares this¹ ; but, because of the difficulties that accompanied their mission, the heroes will obtain, it is to be hoped, the right measure of mercy. 211

But that's not to be!

The Book of God, counting his vast conquests for little and wanting to make clear how miserable he was with all his glory, says:

"The earth fell silent before him. His heart was lifted up and inflamed. He made himself master of the peoples: after which he fell ill on his bed, and recognized that he must die 1."

The most beautiful figure of a conqueror, a founder of empire, celebrated by the Bible, is Cyrus. The name Cyrus means sun.

Of all the conquerors, of all the monarchs who have existed or will exist, Cyrus is the only one whose birth was announced, and even whose name was pronounced, one hundred and fifty years before his appearance. Here is the superb passage announcing it in Isaiah:

I, the Lord, say to Cyrus, my Anointed, whom I have taken by the hand to subdue the nations, to put kings to flight, to open all the gates before him, and none shall be shut against him: "I will go before you; I will humble the great ones of the earth; I will break the gates of brass, and shatter the hinges of iron. I will give you hidden treasures and secret and unknown riches, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who has called you by name.^{212 213}"

Well, it's to this prince, to this sun so magnificently announced in the Bible, that we should compare Napoleon, during the period from 1796 to 1807. Remarkably, the Great Sanhedrin and M. de Chateaubriand met to salute with this comparison the then growing glory, and full of pure hopes, of the new leader of the French:

The Sanhedrin, in 1807, in the midst of the dangerous adulations we have reproached it for ¹, was right on this point: it thanked a new Cyrus;

And M. de Chateaubriand, in 1802 - before the Sanhedrin - writing his first preface to the *Génie du Christianisme*, had the intuition to draw a parallel between Bonaparte and Cyrus, which would later earn him a fine ^{214 215} mockery.

Neither M. de Chateaubriand nor the Sanhedrin were wrong.

Let us briefly recall Cyrus' physiognomy and mission:

A child of Persia, he placed the scepter of Asia

the scepter of Asia. He founded the unity of the East. All the other empires merged into the vast empire of the Persians, like rivers into the ocean. Then came the century of Cyrus. This prince was the most accomplished hero of ancient history. He lacked none of the qualities that make great men great:

wisdom, moderation, courage, greatness of soul, nobility of sentiment, marvellous dexterity in handling minds and winning hearts, profound knowledge of the military art, prudent firmness in executing vast projects, and the intimate conviction that he was on the throne only to make his subjects happy. 11

suffice it to recall the remark of an ancient scholar: that, in the public schools of Persia, Cyrus opened a course of justice to children, just as elsewhere they open a course of letters. But "what is most noteworthy," says Bossuet, "is that this great conqueror, in the very first year of his reign, issued his decree for the re-establishment of the Temple of God in Jerusalem. Delighted by the oracles that had foretold his victories, he confessed that he owed his empire to the God of heaven whom the Jews had been serving: "The rapture of Cyrus to which Bossuet alludes came from the reading of the famous passage from Isaiah that the Jews captive in Babylon showed to their liberator 216 217, a passage in which the coming and the name of Cyrus were announced, as we have said, one hundred and fifty years before his birth. Certainly, this unique privilege in history, then, the majesty of the great empire he founded, and above all his obedience to the Eternal's views in re-establishing the Temple and the people of God, justify, for Cyrus, the meaning of sun attached to his name.

Now, Napoleon, during the first period of his reign, could truly give the hopes of a Cyrus, brought back by the hand of Providence.

Let's imagine one of these polar regions, where the sun is absent for part of the year. The inhabitants have not seen it for a very long time. What privations they endured during those gloomy days! They lived in caves. They heard only the hoarse cries of ravenous birds, only the howls of bears. Eight long months of waiting! But one morning, a streak of gold cut the horizon: it was the sun! Can you imagine the joy of these poor inhabitants? They looked at it, they spoke to it, they contemplated it as something new, they blessed it as the image of Divinity.

Something of this emotion, this ecstasy, certainly occurred when Bonaparte appeared. We had lived under the Terror. Horror, silence and night had turned France into an icy land. On the other hand, Bonaparte had gone to the Orient, to those mysterious lands where light comes from. Suddenly, without being expected, he returned from Egypt, arrived in Paris, and followed by his grenadiers and twenty victories, launched this apostrophe at the Jacobins: What have you done with France? It was the glare of the sun tearing through the clouds and reappearing over France!

Then, in the wake of this dazzling sunrise, what rays in all directions, what works fertilized by his genius! Nothing escaped his piercing gaze, nothing was left untouched by his solicitude. He spreads his benefits to Christians and Israelites, to blacks and whites, to armies and schools, to legislation and agriculture: like the star of the day shining with equal splendor on peaceful countryside and battlefields! What a glorious career, with the procession of marshals, the eagles, the guard, the Legion of Honor; the Concordat and the reopened churches; the Civil Code and the University, of which only the tutelary sides are visible at the time; the Ecole Polytechnique, the digging of ports and canals, the repair of roads; the Banque de France; the Madeleine and the Panthéon; the Austerlitz bridge over the Seine; the Vendôme column, the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel; the astonishment of Europe, the eyes of all the sovereigns turned towards the Tuileries; and above so many illustrious things, the presence of Pius VII at Notre-Dame to crown Napoleon restorer of order and religion in French society!

In truth, in the face of such an array of services and such a profusion of rays, were we not justified in hailing the appearance of a new Cyrus? Providence delighted in this reproduction. The outline remained fixed in the first period of the Empire. Ninety years on, it has not faded. In France, people still live on the enormous glory that Napoleon amassed.

Why should this apology not apply to the full extent of the Empire? But a second period follows in which we no longer encounter Cyrus. So who do we meet?

Another biblical figure: Herod the Great.

III

Alas! yes, when the features of Cyrus, which Providence had wished to paint on Napoleon's face, faded, the Emperor began to express Herod the Great.

This Herod is the one who occupies the throne of Judea when Christ comes into the world.
What does Herod the Great look like?

Readers will be glad to know, as this monarch has remained unknown to many, in more ways than one. The type of Herod the Great presents magnificence of vision and audacity, but also that furious ambition to reign which resorts to cruelty, irreligion and all manner of evil passions.

Herod was a man of means. An Idumean by birth, he had ascended the throne of Judea with the help of the Romans. In order to make people forget his origins through the loss of ancient family traditions, he burned the archives and genealogies that had been carefully preserved for centuries in the Temple of Jerusalem. Shy and cruel, he got rid of anyone who got in his way.

There remained one young prince, seventeen years old, Aristobull III, the last offspring of the Asmonaeans and dear to the people: he was drowned in a bath, on his orders. Once in peaceful possession of the throne, Herod turned his attention to pompous deeds, both for the benefit of the Jews and the glory of the Romans, and it was his magnificence that earned him the nickname of the Great, which even Athens recognized. Under Herod's despotism, the luxury of the Roman Empire, with all its vices, was introduced into Palestine. Disorder was authorized by the monarch's example. He had given the diadem to the beautiful princess Mariamne, whose virtues were as remarkable as her beauty: he had her killed out of jealousy. He professed the Jewish religion, but in his heart he despised all divine and human laws. Nevertheless, he wanted to win the favor of the Jews by repairing their Temple. Eighteen thousand workers were employed over a period of nine years. The new temple surpassed Solomon's in splendor. Majestic on the hill of Moriah, overlooking a vast plain, its appearance, says Josephus, struck everyone with astonishment and admiration. It was built entirely of snow-white marble, and its ridge was clad in solid gold: when it reflected the sun's rays, the eye could not bear its brilliance. But Herod desecrated this admirable edifice by placing, as a sign of Caesar's spiritual supremacy, a great golden eagle over the Temple's main gate. According to God's law, there should be no such figure. The Jews were enraged, toppled the eagle, and blood flowed freely in Jerusalem. Then it flowed to Bethlehem, in the massacre of the Innocents. But for a tyrant like Herod, accustomed to killing men by the hundreds, what was this carnage of poor shepherd children? To distract from the rigors and cruelties, he kept the Jews busy with huge new constructions. It was then that the city of Caesarea was built with superb palaces, Samaria was sumptuously enlarged, Mount Zion was adorned with a royal dwelling where luxury and genius lavished every possible ornament, and at the sources of the Jordan a sumptuous temple was dedicated to Augustus. As all these constructions were in a pagan style, and the country's customs were being overturned, discontent became widespread. Herod tamed it by giving the people no rest. A temple was built to Apollo on the island of Rhodes, marvelous promenades with arcades embellished the streets of Antioch, and the celebration of the Olympic Games was enhanced by the considerable gifts he sent. Needless to say, such a prince was not to leave the Sovereign Pontificate untouched and undisturbed: all things were scrambled; the High Priests no longer enjoyed the right of heredity; they were created or dismissed according to the king's whim. He also changed the names of the cities, and, to the astonishment of the whole world, in Judea the cities of Antipater, Herodion, Archelaus, Tiberias, etc., came into being. The very towers of Jerusalem took on the names of Mariamne, Antonia, Phasaëlis, so much so that, later, Adrian only needed to inscribe on the ashen city the name of "The City".

IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S BOOK 349 of Ælia-Capitolina. Finally, he died, having wearied the Jewish nation with murder and drudgery. It hardly mattered that his death was not accompanied by monstrous slaughter^{218 219}. He died in terrible torments, eaten away by worms. It is undeniable, however, that he had great qualities and did very fine things.

That's Herod the Great.

Doesn't the comparison with Napoleon present itself?

Like the Idumean, the Corsican was an upstart, and to guarantee the security of his throne and empire, he too resorted to the most terrible means, the dethronement of other kings, and to evil passions.

Alongside the murder of the young Aristobulus III, drowned in a bathtub, was the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, shot in the moat of the Château de Vincennes?

Doesn't the tragic death of Mariamne, the beloved wife, remind us of the discarded Josephine de Beauharnais?

Moreover, Herod and Napoleon share the same outbursts of anger, and the same calls for duplicity: both know how to combine the lion's wrath with the cunning of the fox. Herod would certainly not have disavowed the bad faith that attached the organic articles to the Concordat; and Napoleon would not have blamed the hypocrisy that guided the Magi from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, to help them find the Messiah.

Both have the same marble heart, but Herod's is harder.

Both sought to be grand, to dazzle with magnificence: they succeeded. They thrust their subjects into glory.

Herod overwhelmed Judea with pompous constructions, while Napoleon suffocated France with conquests and crowns.

For both, human life counts for nothing. The golden eagle spills blood at the gate of the Temple, and the eagles of the Empire drip it on the battlefield.

There comes a time when panic-stricken populations appeal to Heaven against the two tyrants. But they disappeared only after revolutionizing everything: Herod tore up state archives, burned family genealogies, overturned even the names of towns; Napoleon tore down and rolled up borders, peoples, nationalities and customs in a European jumble.

Together, they laid a sacrilegious hand on that which is holy: the High Priests were deposed in Jerusalem, the Pope was taken from Rome.

They died, both struck down by divine justice: one was gnawed alive by worms, the other gnawed at himself on the rock of Saint Helena.

Between Cyrus and Herod the Great, illuminated by both: this is the true face of Napoleon the Great; Restorative with the former, nefarious with the latter;

Providence modelled him on the first; Revolution led him towards the second.

11 rose with Cyrus, and fell on Herod's side.

IV

Was his work, in 'two such disparate periods, profitable? From chariot of the sun to chariot armed with scythes, has his passage been useful to France and to society?

Let Bonaparte answer about Napoleon:

When he was still First Consul, he went to Ermenonville, a beautiful estate in the Oise region, where the Count de Girardin had offered Jean-Jacques Rousseau asylum in 1778: the philosopher spent his last days there, and was then buried in the middle of a lake in the park, on an island called Île des Peupliers. In his *Mémoires*, the noble owner recounts Bonaparte's visit as follows:

On arriving at the île des Peupliers, the First Consul stopped before the tomb of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and said: "It would have been better for the repose of France if this man F had never existed.

"And why, citoyen consul?

"He's the one who paved the way for French evolution.

"I thought it wasn't your place to complain about the Revolution.

"Well, Vavenir will learn if it weren't better, for the rest of the world, that neither Rousseau nor I had ever existed.

"And he dreamily resumed his walk²²⁰.

The future evoked by the stern visitor has brought its lessons .

They are there for all to see;

As far as the Jews are concerned, without Rousseau there would not have been the emancipation they enjoyed in the name of the Rights of Man.

And without Napoleon, there would not have been, following the Great Sanhedrin, the organization begun for this people in the midst of other peoples who, on the contrary, were becoming disorganized. But above the judgment of Bonaparte, there is the judgment of God; and, in the strategy of divine mercy, there are movements that save the person of a great man and his work.

The person:

Brilliant career of Napoleon in justice and truth, you were not long, because any human creature is incapable of sustaining for long the role of sun that belongs only to Jesus Christ. God's Christ alone is the sun of humanity. Even Cyrus, his prophetic figure 1, could not sustain this role until the end 221 222. So Napoleon soon declined, and went to die on a lost island in the Atlantic. And there, an act of repentance in the evening twilight, a last sigh in charity, did they not restore to the humiliated star, on the other side of time, the radiant glow of its first mornings? May God, the God who forgives and crowns, have given him this grace!

But the work?

The work for which Bonaparte, in Ile des Peupliers, in front of Rousseau's mound, was as if frightened of his own existence, it has, alas, resulted in ruins and rubble which, after nearly a century, have not finished piling up. But here again, God and his mercy will have the last word. Here is the superb march of the Almighty described on the first page of Scripture:

For each of the six days of creation, the biblical account

that God began in the evening and ended in the morning. God said: Let there be light, and there was light. And out of the evening and the morning came the first day. – And God said: Let the firmament appear in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters; and he called the firmament heaven. And out of the evening and the morning came the second day. –God said: Let the earth bring forth green grass that bears seed, and fruit trees that bear fruit. And so it was. And of the evening and the morning was the third day. – And likewise for the other days. –

So the Creator began in the evening and ended in the morning; but why didn't he begin in the morning and end in the evening?

In His wisdom and goodness, God foresaw that man, through weaknesses, errors and depravities, would frequently bring night back into the work entrusted to him; that the rich colors of the physical order and the beautiful virtues of the moral order would often be as if annihilated by the shadows of evening; and that, where life circulated, black horizons and dread would extend : and then, infinitely merciful, he deigned, in the six days of creation, to start constantly from the evening, in order to teach man that his Providence would not let itself be overcome by darkness, and that, whatever epochs of decadence, ruin and darkness that human weakness and perversity might produce in the course of the ages, Providence, in the games of his wisdom and love, would always end in the morning.

We are in the evening of the century that possessed Napoleon.

IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S BOOK 355 To the salutary transformations his genius brought about, his arm associated many ruins, and ruins, at this time, move us more than transformations. Even so, the rubble has not finished piling up, for the giant, were he to return, would consider the means he had of overturning barriers child's play, compared to those which science has, since him, delivered to mankind. Around the ruins, everyone is on their feet, anxiously asking: What can we hope for? Should we hope? What will become of us?

Some say: From the ruins an eagle may yet emerge!

Others say: Only a royal flower can cover them and make them forget.

Others say: It's the way to the last ruin and the consummation of centuries.

All we have to do to have hope is listen first to the Vatican, then pick up our old Bible and reread, on the first page, the Almighty's journey: from evening to morning.

END OF PART TWO